J. Cradock's Book

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(6008)

THE SECOND VOLUME

OF THE

WORKS

OF THE

Rev. JOHN FLETCHER.

CONTAINING

I. A Vindication of Mr. WESLEY's Minutes, or the FIRST CHECK to ANTINOMIANISM, in Five Letters to the Hon. and Rev. Mr. SHIRLEY.

II. The SECOND CHECK to ANTINOMIANISM, in Three Letters to the Hon. and Rev. Mr. SHIRLEY.

III. The THIRD CHECK to ANTINOMIANISM, in a Letter to the Author of *Pietas Oxonienſis*.

Firſt Check to Antinomianiſm;

OR, A

VINDICATION

OF THE

Rev. Mr. WESLEY's Laſt MINUTES:

OCCASIONED BY

A CIRCULAR LETTER,

INVITING PRINCIPAL PERSONS,

Both Clergy and Laity,

AS WELL OF THE

Diſſenters as of the eſtabliſhed Church,

WHO DISAPPROVE OF THOSE MINUTES,

To oppoſe them in a Body, as a dreadful Hereſy:

AND DESIGNED

To remove Prejudice, check Raſhneſs, promote Forbearance, defend the Character of an eminent Miniſter of Chriſt, and prevent ſome important ſcriptural Truths from being haſtily branded as heretical.

In FIVE LETTERS,

To the Hon. and Rev. AUTHOR of the circular LETTER.

By a Lover of Quietneſs and Liberty of Conſcience.

LONDON:

Printed by G. PARAMORE, North-Green, Worſhip-Street.
Sold by G. WHITFIELD, at the Chapel, City-Road; and at the Methodiſt Preaching-Houſes in Town and Country. 1795.

A Copy of the circular Letter, which has given occaſion to this Vindication; to which is annexed a copy of the Rev. Mr. Weſley's Minutes.

SIR,

Whereas Mr. Weſley's Conference is to be held at Briſtol, on Tueſday the 6th of Auguſt next, it is propoſed by Lady Huntingdon and many other Chriſtian Friends (real Proteſtants) to have a meeting at Briſtol, at the ſame time, of ſuch principal Perſons both Clergy and Laity who diſapprove of the underwritten Minutes; and as the ſame are thought injurious to the very Fundamental Principles of Chriſtianity, it is further propoſed, that they go in a body to the ſaid Conference, and inſiſt upon a formal Recantation of the ſaid Minutes; and in caſe of a refuſal, that they ſign and publiſh their Proteſt againſt them. Your preſence, Sir, on this occaſion is particularly requeſted: but if it ſhould not ſuit your convenience to be there, it is deſired that you will tranſmit your ſentiments on the ſubject to ſuch perſon as you think proper to produce them. It is ſubmitted to you, whether it would not be right, in the oppoſition to be made to ſuch a dreadful Hereſy, to recommend it to as many of your Chriſtian Friends, as well of the Diſſenters, as of the eſtabliſhed Church, as you can prevail on to be there, the cauſe being of ſo public a nature.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
WALTER SHIRLEY.

P. S. Your anſwer is deſired, directed to the Counteſs of Huntingdon, or the Rev. Mr. Shirley, or John Lloyd, Eſq; in BATH; or Mr. James Ireland, Merchant, BRISTOL; or to Thomas Powis, Eſq; at Berwick near SHREWSBURY; or to Richard Hill, Eſq; at Hawkſtone near Whitchurch, Shropſhire. Lodgings will be provided. Enquire at Mr. Ireland's, Briſtol.

EXTRACT from the MINUTES of some late CONVERSATIONS between the Rev. Mr. Wesley, and others, at a public Conference, held in London, August 7, 1770, and printed by W. PINE, BRISTOL.

Take heed to your Doctrine.

We said in 1744. "We have leaned too much toward Calvinism." Wherein?

1. With regard to Man's Faithfulness. Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression. And we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, on his authority, that if a man is not *faithful in the unrighteous mammon*, GOD will not *give him the true riches*.

2. With regard to *working for life*. This also our Lord has expressly commanded us. *Labour*, Ἐργαζεσθε, literally, *work for the meat that endureth to everlasting life*. And in fact every Believer, till he comes to glory, works *for*, as well as *from* life.

3. We have received it as a maxim, that "A man is to do nothing, *in order to* justification." Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God, should *cease from evil, and learn to do well*. Whoever repents, should do *works meet for repentance*. And if this is not *in order* to find favour, what does he do them for?

Review the whole affair.

1. Who of us is *now* accepted of God?

He that now believes in Christ, with a loving obedient heart.

2. But who among those that never heard of Christ?

He that feareth God, and worketh righteousness according to the light he has.

3. Is this the same with, "He that is sincere?"

Nearly, if not quite.

4. Is not this "Salvation by Works?"

Not by the *Merit* of works, but by works, as a *Condition*.

5. What have we then been disputing about for these thirty years?

I am afraid *about words*.

6. As

6. As to *Merit* itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid: We are rewarded, *according to our works*, yea, *because of our works*. How does this differ from, *for the sake of our works?* And how differs this from *secundum merita operum?* As our works *deserve?* Can you split this hair? I doubt, I cannot.

7. The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions, is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact justify those, who by their own confession, neither feared God nor wrought righteousness. Is this an exception to the general rule?

It is a doubt, God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure, that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness? His own saying so is not proof: For we know, how all that are convinced of sin, undervalue themselves in every respect.

8. Does not talking of a justified or a sanctified *State*, tend to mislead men? Almost naturally leading them to trust, in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, *according to our works*. According to the whole of our inward tempers, and our outward behaviour.

First LETTER to the Rev. Mr. SHIRLEY.

Honoured and Rev. Sir,

BEFORE a Judge passes sentence upon a person accused of theft, he hears what his neighbours have to say for his character. Mr. Wesley, I grant, is accused of what is worse than theft, *dreadful heresy*; and I know that whosoever maintains a dreadful heresy is a *dreadful heretic*, and that the church of Rome shews no mercy to such: but may not *real Protestants* indulge with the privilege of a felon, one whom they so lately respected as a brother? And may not I, an old friend and acquaintance of his, be permitted to speak a word in his favour, before he is branded in the forehead, as he has already been on the back?

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This ſtep, I fear, will coſt me my reputation (if I have any) and involve me in the ſame condemnation with him whoſe cauſe, together with that of truth, I deſign to plead: But when humanity prompts, when gratitude calls, when friendſhip excites, when reaſon invites, when juſtice demands, when truth requires, and conſcience ſummons; he does not deſerve the name of a *Chriſtian friend*, who, for any conſideration, heſitates to vindicate what he eſteems truth, and to ſtand by an aggrieved friend, brother, and father. Were I not, Sir, on ſuch an occaſion as this, to ſtep out of my beloved obſcurity, you might deſervedly reproach me as a *daſtardly wretch*: Nay, you have already done it in general terms in your excellent ſermon on the fear of man. "How often, ſay you, do men ſneakingly forſake their friends, inſtead of glorioufly ſupporting them againſt a powerful adverſary, even when their cauſe is juſt, for reaſons naſtily prudential, for fear of giving umbrage to a ſuperior party or intereſt."

Theſe generous words of your's, Rev. Sir, together with the leave you give both church-men and diſſenters, to direct to *you* their anſwers to your circular Letter, are my excuſe for intruding upon you by this epiſtle, and my apology for begging your candid attention, while I attempt to convince you that my Friend's principles and minutes are not heretical: In order to this, I ſhall lay before you, and the principal perſons both Clergy and Laity, whom you have from all parts of England and Wales convened at Briſtol by printed letters:

I. A general view of the Rev. Mr. Weſley's doctrine.

II. An account of the commendable deſign of his minutes.

III. A vindication of the propoſitions which they contain, by arguments taken from Scripture, Reaſon, and Experience; and by quotations from eminent calviniſt divines, who have ſaid the ſame things in different words.

And ſuppoſe you, yourſelf, Sir, in particular, ſhould appear to be a ſtrong aſſertor of the doctrines which you call a *dreadful hereſy* in Mr. W. I hope you will

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not refuse me leave to conclude by expostulating with you upon your conduct in this affair, and recommending to you, and our other Christian friends, the forbearance which you recommend to others in one of your Sermons; "Why doth the narrow heart of man pursue with malice, or rashness, those who presume to differ from him?" Yea, and what is most extraordinary, those who agree with him in all essential points?

I. When, in an intricate case, a prudent Judge is afraid to pass an unjust sentence, he inquires, as I observed, into the general conduct of the person accused, and by that means frequently finds out the truth which he investigates. As that method may be of service in the present case, permit me, Sir, to lay before you a general view of Mr. W's doctrine.

1. For above these sixteen years I have heard him frequently in his chapels, and sometimes in my church; I have familiarly conversed and corresponded with him, and have often perused his numerous works in verse and prose: and I can truly say, that during all that time I have heard him, upon every proper occasion, steadily maintain the total Fall of Man in Adam, and his utter inability to recover himself, or take any one step towards his recovery, "without the grace of God preventing him that he may have a good will, and working with him when he has that good will."

The deepest expressions that ever struck my ears, on the melancholy subject of our natural depravity and helplessness, are those which dropped from his lips: and I have ever observed that he constantly ascribes to divine grace, not only the good works and holy tempers of believers, but all the good thoughts of upright Heathens, and the good desires of those professors whom he sees begin in the spirit and end in the flesh; when, to my great surprise, some of those who accuse him of "robbing God of the glory of his grace, and ascribing too much to man's power," directly or indirectly maintain, that Demas and his fellow apostates never had any grace; and that if once they went on far in the ways of God, it was merely by the force of fallen nature; a sentiment which Mr. W. looks upon as diametrically

metrically oppofite to the humbling aſſertion of our Lord, "Without me ye can do nothing," and which he can no more admit than the rankeſt Pelagianiſm.

2. I muſt likewiſe teſtify that he faithfully points out Chriſt as the only way of ſalvation; and ſtrongly recommends faith as the only means of receiving him, and all the benefits of his righteous life and meritorious death: and truth obliges me to declare, that he frequently expreſſes his deteſtation of the errors of modern Phariſees, who laugh at Original Sin, ſet up the powers of fallen man, cry down the operations of God's Spirit, deny the abſolute neceſſity of the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and refuſe him the glory of all the good that may be found in Jew or Gentile. And you will not without difficulty, Sir, find in England, and perhaps in all the world, a miniſter who hath borne more frequent teſtimonies, either from the pulpit or the preſs, againſt thoſe dangerous errors. All his works confirm my aſſertion, eſpecially his ſermons on Original Sin, and Salvation by Faith, and his maſterly refutation of Dr. Taylor, the wiſeſt Arian, Pelagian, and Socinian of our age. Nor am I afraid to have this teſtimony confronted with his Minutes, being fully perſuaded that, when they are candidly explained, they rather confirm than overthrow it.

His preaching of the Fall and the Recovery is attended with a peculiar advantage, it is cloſe and experimental: he not only points out the truth of thoſe doctrines, but preſſes his hearers to cry to God that they may feel their weight upon their hearts. Some open thoſe great truths very clearly, but let their congregations reſt, like the ſtony ground hearers, in the firſt emotions of ſorrow and joy which the word frequently excites. Not ſo Mr. Weſley; he will have true penitents "feel the plague of their own hearts, travel, be heavy laden, and receive the ſentence of death in themſelves, according to the glorious miniſtration of condemnation:" and, "according to the miniſtration of the ſpirit which exceeds in glory," he inſiſts upon true believers knowing for themſelves that Jeſus hath power on earth to forgive ſins, and aſſert that they

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taſte the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, and that they are made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt and the divine nature; the Spirit itſelf bearing witneſs with their ſpirit that they are the children of God.

3. The next fundamental doctrine in Chriſtianity, is that of Holineſs of heart and life; and no one can here accuſe Mr. W. of leaning to the Antinomian deluſion, which makes void the law through a ſpeculative and barren faith: On the contrary, he appears to be peculiarly ſet for the defence of practical religion; for, inſtead of repreſenting Chriſt as the miniſter of ſin, with Ranters, to the great grief and offence of many, he ſets him forth as a compleat Saviour from ſin. Not ſatisfied to preach holineſs begun, he preaches finiſhed holineſs, and calls believers to ſuch a degree of heart-purifying faith, as may enable them continually to triumph in Chriſt, as being made to them of God, ſanctification, as well as righteouſneſs.

It is, I grant, his misfortune (if indeed it is one) to preach a fuller ſalvation than moſt profeſſors expect to enjoy here; for he aſſerts that Jeſus can make clean the inſide, as well as the outſide, of his veſſels unto honour; that "he hath power on earth to ſave his people from their ſins," and that his blood cleanſes from all ſin, from the guilt and defilement both of original and actual corruption. He is bold enough to declare with St. John, that "if we ſay we have no ſin," either by nature or practice, "we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confeſs our ſins, God is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to *cleanſe* us from all unrighteouſneſs." He is legal enough not to be aſhamed of theſe words of Moſes, "The Lord thy God will circumciſe thine heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, that thou mayeſt live." And he dares to believe that the Lord can perform the words which he ſpoke by Ezekiel; "I will ſprinkle clean water upon you, and you ſhall be clean; from *all* your filthineſs, and from *all* your idols will I cleanſe you. A new heart alſo will I give you; I will

I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh: and I will put my ſpirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes; and ye ſhall keep my judgments and do them. I will alſo ſave you from *all* your uncleanneſſes." Hence it is that he conſtantly exhorts his hearers to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Saviour; till by a ſtrong and lively faith, they can continually "reckon themſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord:" he tells them that "he who committeth ſin is the ſervant of ſin."—That "our old man is crucified with Chriſt, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin."—That "if the Son ſhall make them free, they ſhall be free indeed."—And that, although the law of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, will not deliver them from the innocent infirmities incident to fleſh and blood, it will nevertheleſs make them free from the law of ſin and death, and enable them to ſay with holy triumph, "How ſhall we that are dead to ſin live any longer therein?" In a word, he thinks that God can ſo ſhed abroad his love in our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt given unto us, as to ſanctify us wholly, ſoul, body and ſpirit; and enable us to rejoice evermore, pray without ceaſing, and in every thing give thanks. And he is perſuaded that he who can do far exceeding abundantly above all that we can aſk or think, is able to fill us with the perfect love which caſts out fear; that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, may have the mind that was in Chriſt, be righteous as the *man* Jeſus was righteous, walk as he alſo walked; and be in our meaſure as he was in the world; he as the ſtock of the tree of righteouſneſs, and we as the branches, having our fruit from him unto holineſs, and ſerving God without fear in true righteouſneſs all the days of our life.

This he ſometimes calls full Sanctification, the ſtate of fathers in Chriſt, or the glorious liberty of the children of God; ſometimes, a being ſtrengthened, ſtabliſhed, and ſettled; or being rooted and grounded in love: but moſt commonly he calls it Chriſtian Perfection;

fection: a word which though uſed by the apoſtles in the ſame ſenſe, cannot be uſed by him without raiſing the pity or indignation of one half of the religious world; ſome making it the ſubject of their pious ſneers, and godly lampoons; while others tell you roundly, "they abhor it above every thing in the creation." *Tantæne animis cœleſtibus iræ!*

On account of this doctrine it is that he is traduced as a Phariſee, a Papiſt, an Anti-chriſt; ſome of his oppoſers taking it for granted that he makes void the prieſtly office of Chriſt, by affirming that his blood can ſo compleatly waſh us here from our ſins, that at death we ſhall be found of him in peace, without ſpot, wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; while others, to colour their oppoſition to the many ſcriptures which he brings to ſupport this unfaſhionable doctrine, give it out that he only wants the old man ſo refined in all his tempers, and regulated in all his outward behaviour, as to appear perfect in the fleſh; or, in other terms, that he ſets up phariſaic ſelf, inſtead of Chriſt compleatly formed in us as the full hope of glory. But I muſt (for one) do him the juſtice to ſay he is miſapprehended, and that what he calls perfection, is nothing but the rich cluſter of all the ſpiritual bleſſings promiſed to believers in the Goſpel; and, among the reſt, a continual ſenſe of the virtue of Chriſt's atoning and purifying blood, preventing, both old guilt from returning, and new guilt from faſtening, upon the conſcience; together with the deepeſt conſciouſneſs of our helpleſſneſs and nothingneſs in our beſt eſtate, the moſt endearing diſcoveries of the Redeemer's love, and the moſt humbling and yet raviſhing views of his glorious fulneſs: witneſs theſe lines which conclude one of his favourite hymns on that ſubject.

Confound, o'erpower me with thy grace;
I would be by myſelf abhor'd:
(All might, all majeſty, all praiſe,
All glory be to CHRIST my LORD.)
Now let me gain perfection's height,
Now let me into nothing fall,
Be leſs than nothing in my ſight,
And feel that CHRIST is all in all.

4. But this is not all: he holds also a General Redemption, and its necessary consequences, which some account *dreadful heresies*. He asserts with St. Paul, "that Christ, by the *grace* of God, tasted death for every man;" and this *grace* he calls *free*, as extending itself *freely* to all. Nor can he help expressing his surprise at those pious ministers, who maintain that the Saviour keeps his grace, as they suppose he kept his blood, from the greatest part of mankind, and yet engross to themselves the title of *preachers of free grace!*

He frequently observes with the same Apostle, that "Christ is the Saviour of *all* men, but especially of them that believe;" and that "God will have *all* men to be saved," consistently with their moral agency, and the tenor of his gospel.

With St. John he maintains, that "God is Love," and that "Christ is the propitiation not only for our sins, but also for the sins of the *whole* world:" With David he affirms, that "God's mercy is over all his works:" and with St. Peter, that "the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance;" yea, that God, without hypocrisy, "commandeth *all*, men *every where*, to repent." Accordingly he says with the Son of God, "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely;" and after his blessed example, as well as by his gracious command, he "preaches the gospel *to* every creature;" which he apprehends would be inconsistent with common honesty, if there was not a *gospel for every creature*. Nor can he doubt of it in the least, when he considers that Christ is a king as well as a priest, that we are under a law to Him, that those men who will not have him to reign over them, shall be brought and slain before him; yea, that He will judge the secrets of men, according to St. Paul's Gospel, and take vengeance of all them that obey not his own gospel, and be the author of eternal salvation to none but them that obey him. With this principle, as with a key given us by God himself, he opens those things which are hard to be understood in the epistles of St. Paul, and which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as

they

they do some other scriptures, if not to their own destruction, at least to the overthrowing of the faith of some weak Christians, and the hardening of many, very many infidels.

As a true Son of the Church of England, he believes that *Christ redeemed him and* all *mankind*; that *for us* men, and not merely for the *elect*, "he came down from heaven, and made upon the cross, a full perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the *whole* world." Like an honest man, and yet a man of sense, he so subscribed the 17th Article as not to reject the 31st, which he thinks of equal force, and much more explicit: and therefore, as the 17th Article authorises him, he "receives God's promises in such wise as they are generally set forth in holy scripture:" rejecting, after the example of our Governors in Church and State, the Lambeth Articles, in which the doctrine of *absolute, unconditional* election and reprobation was maintained, and which some Calvinist Divines in the days of Queen Elizabeth, vainly attempted to impose upon these kingdoms, by adding them to the 39 Articles. Far therefore from thinking he does not act a fair part, in rejecting the doctrine of particular redemption; he cannot conceive by what salvo the consciences of those ministers who embrace it, can permit them to say to each of their communicants, "The blood of Christ was shed for *thee*;" and to baptize promiscuously *all* children within their respective parishes, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," when all that are unredeemed have no more right to the *blood*, *name*, and *Spirit* of Christ, than Lucifer himself.

Thus far Mr. W. agrees with Arminius, because he thinks that illustrious Divine agreed thus far with the scriptures, and all the early Fathers of the Church. But if Arminius (as the Author of Pietas Oxonienfis affirms in his letter to Dr. Adams) "denied that man's nature is totally corrupt, and asserted that he hath still a freedom of will to turn to God, but not without the assistance of grace," Mr. W. is no Arminian, for he strongly asserts the *total* fall of man, and constantly

maintains that by nature man's will is only free to evil, and that divine grace must first prevent, and then continually further him, to make him willing and able to turn to God.

I must however confess that he does not, as some *real Protestants*, continually harp upon the words *free* grace, and *free* will, but he gives reasons of considerable weight for it. 1. Christ and his Apostles never did so: 2. He knows the word *grace* necessarily implies the *freeness* of a favour, and the word *will* the *freedom* of our choice; and he has too much sense to delight in perpetual tautology. 3. He finds by blessed experience that when the will is touched by divine grace, and yields to the touch, it is as free to good, as it was before to evil. He dares not therefore make the maintaining of *free will*, any more than of *free breath*, the criterion of an unconverted man. On the contrary, he believes none are converted but those who have a *free will* to follow Jesus; and far from being ashamed to be called a *free-willer*, he affirms it is as essential to all men to be *free-willing creatures*, as to be *rational animals*; and he supposes he can as soon find a diamond or a flint without gravity, as a good or bad man without free-will.

Nor will I conceal that I never heard him use that favourite expression of some good men, *Why me? Why me?* Though he is not at all against their using it, if they can do it to edification. But as he does not see that any of the Saints, either of the Old or New Testament, ever used it, he is afraid to be humble and *wise above what is written*, lest *voluntary humility* should introduce refined pride before he is aware. Doubting therefore whether he can say, *Why me? Why me?* Without the self-pleasing idea of his being preferred to thousands, or without a touch of the secret self-applause that tickles the Pharisee's heart, when he thanks God he is not as other men, he leaves the fashionable exclamation to others, with all the refinements of modern divinity; and chuses to keep to St. Paul's expression, "He loved me," which implies no exclusion of his poor fellow-sinners; or to that of the royal Psalmist, "Lord, what

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is *man* that thou art mindful of him; and the *son of man* that thou visitest him!"

5. As a consequence of the doctrine of general Redemption, Mr. W. lays down two axioms of which he never loses sight in his preaching. The first is, that *All our salvation is of God in Christ*, and therefore *of grace*; all opportunities, invitations, inclination, and power to believe, being bestowed upon us of mere grace;—grace most absolutely free: and so far I hope that all who are called gospel-ministers agree with him: But he proceeds farther, for secondly, he asserts with equal confidence, that according to the gospel dispensation, *All our damnation is of ourselves*, by our obstinate unbelief, and avoidable unfaithfulness: as we may neglect so great salvation, desire to be excused from coming to the feast of the Lamb, make light of God's gracious offers, refuse to occupy, bury our talent, and act the part of the slothful servant; or in other words, resist, grieve, do despite to, and quench the Spirit of grace, *By our moral agency*.

The first of these evangelical axioms he builds upon such scriptures as these: "In me is thy help."—"Look unto me and be saved."—"No man cometh unto me except the Father draw him."—"What hast thou that thou hast not received?"—"We are not sufficient to think aright of ourselves, all our sufficiency is of God."—"Christ is exalted to give repentance."—"Faith is the gift of God."—"Without me ye can do nothing," &c. &c.

And the second he founds upon such passages as these, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light."—"Ye always resist the Holy Ghost."—"They rejected the counsel of God towards themselves."—"Grieve not the Spirit."—"Quench not the Spirit."—"My Spirit shall not always strive with man."—"Turn, why will ye die?"—"Kiss the Son lest ye perish."—"I gave Jezebel time to repent, and she repented not."—"The goodness of God leads, N. B. not drags, thee to repentance, who after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasures up wrath unto thyself."—"Their eyes

have they closed lest they should see and be converted, and I should heal them."—"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven."—"I set before you life and death, chuse life!"—"Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."—"I would have gathered you, and ye would not." &c. &c.

As to the *Moral Agency* of man, Mr. W. thinks it cannot be denied upon the principles of common sense, and civil government; much less upon those of natural and revealed religion; as nothing would be more absurd than to bind us by laws of a civil or spiritual nature; nothing more foolish than to propose to us punishments and rewards; and nothing more capricious than to inflict the one or bestow the other upon us; if we were not *Moral Agents*.

He is therefore persuaded the most compleat system of divinity is that in which neither of those two axioms is superseded: it is bold and unscriptural to set up the one at the expence of the other; the Prophets, the Apostles, and Jesus Christ left us no such precedent: and to avoid what is termed *legality*, we must not run into refinements which they knew nothing of, and make them perpetually contradict themselves: nor can we without an open violation of the laws of candour and criticism, lay a greater stress upon a few obscure and controverted passages, than upon an hundred plain and irrefragable scripture proofs. He therefore supposes that those persons are under a capital mistake, who maintain only the first Gospel-axiom, and under pretence of securing to God *all* the glory of the salvation of *one* elect, give to perhaps *twenty* reprobates full room to lay *all* the blame of their damnation, either upon their first parents, or their Creator. This way of making twenty *real* holes, in order to stop a *supposed* one, he cannot see consistent either with wisdom or scripture.

Thinking it therefore safest not to put asunder the truths which God has joined together, he makes all extremes meet in one blessed scriptural medium. With the Antinomian he preaches, "God worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure;" and with

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the Legaliſt he cries, "Work out *therefore* your own ſalvation with fear and trembling;" and thus he has all St. Paul's doctrine. With the Ranter he ſays, "God has choſen you, you are elect;" but as it is "through ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth," with the diſciples of Moſes he infers, "Make your calling and election ſure, for *if* ye *do* theſe things ye ſhall never fall." Thus he preſents his hearers with all St. Peter's ſyſtem of truth, which the others had rent in pieces.

Again, according to the firſt axiom he ſays with the perfect Preacher, "All things are now ready;" but with him he adds alſo according to the ſecond, *Come*, leſt you *never taſte* the goſpel feaſt. Thinking it extremely dangerous not to divide the word of God aright, he endeavours to give to every one the portion of it that ſuits him, cutting according to times, perſons, and circumſtances, either with the ſmooth or the rough edge of his two-edged ſword. Therefore when he addreſſes thoſe that are ſteady, and partakers of the goſpel grace from the firſt day until now, as the Philippians, he makes uſe of the firſt principle, and teſtifies his confidence that he who hath begun a good work in them will perform it until the day of Chriſt. But when he expoſtulates with perſons that ran well, and do not now obey the truth, according to his ſecond axiom, he ſays to them, as St. Paul did to the Galatians, "I ſtand in doubt of you; ye are fallen from grace."

In ſhort, he would think that he mangled the goſpel, and forgat part of his awful commiſſion, if when he has declared that he who believeth ſhall be ſaved, he did not alſo add, that he who believeth not ſhall be damned; or, which is the ſame, that none periſh merely for Adam's ſin, but for their own unbelief, and wilful rejection of the Saviour's grace. Thus he advances God's glory every way, entirely aſcribing to his mercy and grace all the ſalvation of the elect, and compleatly freeing him from the blame of directly or indirectly hanging the mill-ſtone of damnation about the neck of the reprobate. And this he effectually does by ſhewing that the former owe all they are, and

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all they have to creating, preſerving and redeeming love, whoſe innumerable bounties they freely and continually receive; and that the rejection of the latter has abſolutely no cauſe but their obſtinate rejecting of that aſtoniſhing mercy which wept over Jeruſalem; and prayed, and bled even for thoſe that ſhed the atoning blood;—the blood that expiated all ſin but that of final unbelief.

I have now finiſhed my ſketch of Mr. W's doctrine, ſo far as it has fallen under my obſervation during above ſixteen years particular acquaintance with him and his works: it is not my deſign, Sir, to enquire into the truth of his ſentiments, much leſs ſhall I attempt to prove them orthodox, according to the ideas that ſome *real Proteſtants* entertain of orthodoxy. This only I beg leave to obſerve, ſuppoſe he is miſtaken in all the ſcriptures on which he founds his doctrine of Chriſtian Perfection and General Redemption, yet his miſtakes ſeem rather to ariſe from a regard for Chriſt's glory, than from enmity to his offices; and all together do not amount to any hereſy at all; the fundamental doctrines of Chriſtianity, namely, the fall of man, juſtification by the merits of Chriſt, ſanctification by the agency of the Holy Spirit, and the worſhip of the One true God in the myſterious diſtinction of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as it is maintained in the three Creeds, not being at all affected by any of his peculiar ſentiments.

But you poſſibly imagine, Sir, that he has lately changed his doctrine, and adopted a new ſyſtem. If you do, you are under a very great miſtake, and to convince you of it, permit me to conclude this letter by a paragraph of one which I received from him laſt ſpring.

"I always did (for between theſe thirty and forty years) clearly aſſert the total fall of man, and his utter inability to do any good of himſelf: the abſolute neceſſity of the grace and Spirit of God to raiſe even a good thought or deſire in our hearts: the Lord's rewarding no work, and accepting of none, but ſo far as they proceed from his preventing, convincing and converting

verting grace through the Beloved. The blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt being the ſole meritorious cauſe of our ſalvation. And who is there in England that has aſſerted theſe things more ſtrongly and ſteadily than I have done?" Leaving you to anſwer this queſtion, I remain with due reſpect, Hon. and Rev. Sir, your obedient Servant, in the bond of a peaceful goſpel,

MADELEY, *July* 29, 1771. J. FLETCHER.

Second LETTER to the Rev. Mr. SHIRLEY.

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

HAVING proved that Mr. W's doctrine is not heretical, permit me to conſider the propoſitions which cloſe the Minutes of his laſt Conference, on which, it ſeems, your charge of *dreadful hereſy* is founded.

They wear, I confeſs a new aſpect, and ſuch is the force of prejudice and attachment to particular modes of expreſſion, that at firſt they appeared to be very unguarded, if not altogether erroneous. But when the din of the ſevere epithets, beſtowed upon them by ſome warm friends, was out of my ears; when I had prayed to the Father of Lights for meekneſs of wiſdom, and given place to calm reflection, I ſaw them in quite a different light. Our Lord commands us "Not to judge according to the appearance, but to judge righteous judgment;" appearances therefore did not ſeem to me ſufficient to condemn any man, much leſs an elder and ſuch an elder as Mr. W. I conſidered beſides, that the circumſtances in which a miniſter ſometimes finds himſelf with reſpect to his hearers, and particular errors ſpreading among them, may oblige him to do or ſay things, which though very right according to the time, place, perſons, and junctures, may yet appear very wrong to thoſe who do not ſtand juſt where he does. I ſaw for example, that if St. Paul had been in St. James's circumſtances, he would have preached juſtification in as guarded a manner as St. James; and

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that if St. James had been in St. Paul's place, he would have preached it as freely as St. Paul; and I recollected that in some places St. Paul himself seems even more legal than St. James. See Rom. ii. 7, 10, 14. Gal. vi. 7, &c. and 1 Tim. vi. 19.

These reflections made me not only suspend my judgment concerning Mr. W's propositions, but consider what we may candidly suppose was his design in writing them for, and recommending them to, the preachers in connection with him. And I could not help seeing, that it was only to guard them and their hearers against Antinomian principles and practices, which spread like wild fire in some of his Societies; where persons who spoke in the most glorious manner of Christ, and their interest in his compleat salvation, have been found living in the greatest immoralities, or indulging the most unchristian tempers. Nor need I go far for a proof of this sad assertion. In one of his Societies not many miles from my parish, a married man, who professed being in a state of justification and sanctification, growing wise above what is written, despised his brethren as legalists, and his teachers as persons not clear in the gospel. He instilled his principles into a serious young woman; and what was the consequence? Why, they talked about "finished salvation in Christ," and "the absurdity of perfection in the flesh," till a perfect child was conceived and born; and to save appearances the mother swore it to a travelling man that cannot be heard of. Thus to avoid legality, they plunged into hypocrisy, fornication, adultery, perjury, and the depth of ranterism. Is it not hard that a minister should be traduced as guilty of *dreadful heresy* for trying to put a stop to such dreadful practices? And is it not high time that he should cry to all that regard his warnings, *take heed to your doctrine.* As if he had said,

"Avoid all extremes. While on the one hand you keep clear of the pharisaic delusion that slights Christ, and makes the pretended merit of an imperfect obedience the procuring cause of eternal life; see that on the other hand you do not lead to the Antinomian

error,

error, which under pretence of exalting Chriſt, ſpeaks contemptuouſly of obedience, and *makes void the law through* a *faith that* does not *work by love.* As there is but a ſtep between high Arminianiſm and Self-righteouſneſs, ſo there is but one between high Calviniſm and Antinomianiſm. I charge you to ſhun both, eſpecially the latter."

"You know, by ſad experience, that at this time we ſtand particularly in danger of ſplitting upon the Antinomian rock. Many ſmatterers in Chriſtian experience talk of finiſhed ſalvation in Chriſt, or boaſt of being in a ſtate of juſtification and ſanctification, while they know little of themſelves and leſs of Chriſt. Their whole behaviour teſtifies, that their heart is void of humble love, and full of carnal confidence. They cry, *Lord, Lord*, with as much aſſurance, and as little right as the fooliſh virgins. They paſs for ſweet Chriſtians, dear children of God, and good believers; but their ſecret reſerves evidence them to be only ſuch believers as Simon Magus, Ananias, and Saphira."

"Some with Diotrephes "love to have the preeminence and prate malicious words, and not content therewith, they do not themſelves receive the brethren, and forbid them that would, and even caſt them out of the church" as heretics. Some have "forſaken the right way, and are gone aſtray, following the way of Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs; they are wells without water, clouds without rain, and trees without fruit:" with Judas they try to load themſelves with thick clay, endeavour to lay up treaſures on earth, and make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof. Some, with the inceſtuous Corinthian, are led captive by fleſhly luſts, and fall into the greateſt enormities. Others, with the language of the awakened publican in their mouths, are faſt aſleep in their ſpirits; you hear them ſpeak of the corruptions of their hearts, in as unaffected and airy a manner, as if they talked of freckles upon their faces: it ſeems they run down their ſinful nature, only to apologize for their ſinful practices; or to appear great proficients in ſelf-knowledge, and court the praiſe due to genuine humility."

"Others

"Others quietly ſettled on the lees of the Laodicean ſtate, by the whole tenor of their life ſay, "they are rich, and increaſed in goods, and have need of nothing;" utter ſtrangers to hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, they never importunately beg, never wreſtle hard for the hidden manna: on the contrary, they ſing a *requiem* to their poor dead ſouls, and ſay, "Soul, take thine eaſe, thou haſt goods laid up (in Chriſt) for many years, yea for ever and ever;" and thus, like Demas, they go on talking of Chriſt and heaven, but loving their eaſe, and enjoying this preſent world."

"Yet many of theſe, like Herod, hear and entertain us gladly; but like him alſo they keep their beloved ſin, pleading for it as a right eye, and ſaving it as a right hand. To this day their boſom corruption is not only alive, but indulged; their treacherous Delilah is hugged; and their ſpiritual Agag walks delicately and boaſts that the bitterneſs of death is paſt, and he ſhall never be hewed in pieces before the Lord: Nay, to dare ſo much as to talk of his dying before the body, becomes an almoſt unpardonable crime."

"Forms and fair ſhows of godlineſs deceive us: many, whom our Lord might well compare to whited ſepulchres, look like angels of light when they are abroad, and prove tormenting fiends at home. We ſee them weep under ſermons, we hear them pray and ſing with the tongues of men and angels; they even profeſs the faith that removes mountains; and yet by and by, we diſcover they ſtumble at every mole-hill; every trifling temptation throws them into peeviſhneſs, fretfulneſs, impatience, ill humour, diſcontent, anger, and ſometimes into loud paſſion."

"Relative duties are by many groſsly neglected: huſbands ſlight their wives, or wives neglect and plague their huſbands: Children are ſpoiled, parents diſregarded, and maſters diſobeyed: Yea, ſo many are the complaints againſt ſervants profeſſing godlineſs, on account of their unfaithfulneſs, indolence, pert anſwering again, forgetfulneſs of their menial condition, or inſolent expectations, that ſome ſerious perſons prefer thoſe who have no knowledge of the truth, to thoſe who make an high profeſſion of it." "Know-

"Knowledge is certainly increaſed; many run to and fro after it, but it is ſeldom experimental; the power of God is frequently talked of, but rarely felt, and too often cried down under the deſpicable name of *frames* and *feelings*. Numbers *ſeek* by hearing a variety of goſpel miniſters, reading all the religious books that are publiſhed, learning the beſt tunes to our hymns, diſputing on controverted points of doctrine, telling or hearing church-news, and liſtening to or retailing ſpiritual ſcandal. But alas! few *ſtrive* in pangs of heart-felt convictions, few deny themſelves and take up their croſs daily; few take the kingdom of heaven by the holy violence of wreſtling faith, and agonizing prayer; few ſee, and fewer live in, the kingdom of God, which is righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt. In a word, many ſay, Lo! Chriſt is here; and lo! he is there; but few can conſiſtently witneſs that the kingdom of heaven is within them."

"Many aſſert that the clothing of the king's daughter is of wrought gold, but few, very few experience that ſhe is all glorious within; and it is well, if many are not bold enough to maintain that ſhe is "all full of corruptions." With more truth than ever we may ſay,

> Ye different ſects, who all declare
> Lo! here is Chriſt, or Chriſt is there;
> Your ſtronger proofs divinely give
> And ſhew us where *the Chriſtians* live:
> Your claim alas! Ye cannot prove,
> Ye want the genuine mark of *love*.

"The conſequences of this high, and yet lifeleſs profeſſion, are as evident as they are deplorable. Selfiſh views, ſiniſter deſigns, inveterate prejudice, pitiful bigotry, party ſpirit, ſelf-ſufficiency, contempt of others, envy, jealouſy, *making men offenders for a word*,—poſſibly a ſcriptural word too, taking advantage of each other's infirmities, magnifying innocent miſtakes, putting the worſt conſtruction upon each other's words, and actions, falſe accuſations, back-biting, malice, revenge, perſecution, and a hundred ſuch evils prevail among religious people, to the great aſtoniſhment of the children of the world, and the unſpeakable grief of the true Iſraelites that yet remain among us."

"But this is not all. Some of our hearers do not even keep to the great outlines of Heathen morality: not satisfied practically to reject Christ's declaration, that *it is more blessed to give than to receive*, they proceed to that pitch of covetousness and daring injustice, as not to pay their just debts; yea and to cheat and to extort, whenever they have a fair opportunity. How few of our Societies are there where this, or some other evil has not broken out, and given such shakes to the Ark of the Gospel, that had not the Lord wonderfully interposed, it must long ago have been overset? And you know how to this day the name and truth of God are openly blasphemed among the baptized Heathen, through the Antinomian lives of many, who say they are Jews when they are not, but by their works declare they are of the Synagogue of Satan. At your peril therefore my Brethren, countenance them not: I know you would not do it designedly, but you may do it unawares; therefore take heed;—more than ever take heed to your doctrine. Let it be scripturally evangelical: give not the children's bread unto dogs: comfort not people that do not mourn. When you should give emetics do not administer cordials, and by that means strengthen the hands of the slothful and unprofitable servant. I repeat it once more, warp not to Antinomianism, and in order to this, "Take heed, O! Take heed to your doctrine."

Surely, Sir, there is no harm in this word of exhortation; it is scriptural, and Mr. W's pen cannot make it heretical. *Take* we then *heed* to the design of the directions which follow.

It is evident that, in order to keep his fellow-labourers clear from Antinomianism, he directs them first not to *lean too much toward Calvinism:* and secondly not to *talk of a justified and sanctified State* so unguardedly as some, even Arminians, do; which *tends to mislead men*, and relax their watchful attention to their internal and external works, that is, to the whole of their inward tempers and outward behaviour. See No. 8.

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He produces three particulars, wherein he thinks that both he and his assistants in the Lord's vineyard, having leaned too much towards Calvinism, each of which has a natural and strong tendency to countenance the Antinomian delusion. The first, being afraid or ashamed to maintain that every man is *faithfully* to employ his every talent, though our Lord himself goes so far in maintaining this doctrine as to declare that "if a man is not faithful in the unrighteous mammon, God will not give him the true riches."—The second, being afraid to use the expression *working for life*; although our Lord who must be allowed perfectly to understand his own gospel, uses it himself.—And the third, granting without proper distinction, that a man *is to do nothing in order to justification, than which*, says he, *nothing can be more false*; as common sense dictates that a rebel must lay down his arms before he can receive a pardon from his prince.

This being premised, Mr. W. invites his fellow-labourers to *review the whole affair*; and while he does it he saps the foundations of the babels built by those who call Christ, Lord! Lord! without departing from iniquity. *Who* among Christians, says he, *is now accepted of God?* Not he that like Hymeneus *formerly* believed, and *concerning faith hath* now *made shipwreck*:—Nor he that, like Simon Magus, actually believes with a speculative, Antinomian faith; but "he that now believes in Christ with a loving and obedient heart," or, as our Lord and St. Paul express it, he whose "faith works by love, and whose love keeps God's commandments." This must at once overthrow the pretensions of those whose feigned faith, instead of producing a change in their hearts, only adds positiveness to their self-conceit, bitterness to their bad tempers, and perhaps licentiousness to their worldly lives.

Still carrying on his point he observes next, to the shame of loose Christians, that "none are accepted of God even among the Heathens, but those that fear him and work righteousness." Nor is his observation improper (you, Sir, being judge,) for you tell us in your

fifth sermon, page 84,* that "Cornelius was a man of singular probity, humanity, and morality, and that a view of his character may perhaps convince some who consider themselves as Christians, how far short they are even of his imperfect righteousness."

This leads him, No. 3, to touch upon an important objection, that will naturally occur to the mind of a Protestant, and he answers it by standing *for the necessity of works* as firmly as he does *against their merit* in point of *salvation*; thus cutting down with one truly evangelical stroke, the arrogancy of self-righteous Papists, and the delusion of licentious Protestants. And lest Antinomians should, from the Protestant doctrine that good works have absolutely no merit in point of salvation, take occasion to slight them and live in sin, he very properly observes, No. 6, that believers shall be *rewarded* in heaven, and are even often rewarded on earth *because of their works*, and *according to their works*, which he apprehends does not so widely differ from *secundum merita operum*, as Protestants, in the heat of their contensions with the Papists, have been apt to conclude. No. 7, he starts another objection which Antinomians will naturally make to St. Peter's declaration, that God accepts those who *fear him and work righteousness*.

And now, Hon. Sir, reserving for another place the consideration of his answer, let me appeal to your candor. From the general tenor of these propositions, is it not evident, that Mr. W. (who is now among gospel-ministers what St. James formerly was among the disciples, and Mr. Baxter among the puritan divines, that is, the person peculiarly commissioned by the bishop of souls, to defend the gospel against the incroachments of Antinomians) aims at stemming the torrent of their delusions, and not at all at *injuring the very fundamental principles of Christianity*, or bringing "a *dreadful heresy* into the church."

You may reply, that you do not so much consider what he *aims* at doing, as what he *has* actually done. Nay, Sir, the intention is what a candid judge (much more

* London, reprinted for J. Johnson, 1762.

more a loving brother) should particularly consider. If aiming to kill a wild beast that attacks my friend, I unfortunately stab him, it is a "melancholy accident;" but he wrongs me much, who represents it as a "dreadful barbarity." In like manner, if Mr. W. has unhappily wounded the truth, in attempting to give the wolf in sheep's cloathing a killing stroke, his mistake should rather be called "well-meant legality" than *dreadful heresy*.

You possibly reply: "Let any one look at these Minutes, and say whether all the unawakened clergy in the land would not approve and receive them." And what if they did? Would the propositions be the worse barely for this? Is nothing gospel but what directly shocks common sense? And is the Apostles Creed dreadfully heretical, because all the carnal clergy of the church of England, yea and of the church of Rome receive it? At this strange rate we must give up the Bible itself, for all the Socinians receive it. Ashamed of taking farther notice of an argument by which every Papist might attack the reasonable simplicity of our communion service, and defend the gross absurdity of transubstantiation, I come to an objection of greater weight.

"Mr. W. contradicts himself. He has hitherto preached salvation by faith, and now he talks of *salvation by works, as a condition:* he has a thousand times offered a *free pardon* to the worst of sinners, and now he has the assurance to declare, that *a man is to do something in order to justification.* Where will you find such inconsistencies?" Where! In the Old and New Testament, and especially in the epistles of the great Preachers of free justification, and salvation by faith. There you will see many such *seeming* inconsistencies as these.—*Eternal life is the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Charge the rich to lay up in store for themselves a good foundation, that they may lay hold on eternal life; we are temperate, to obtain an incorruptible crown.—*By grace ye are saved through faith.* In so *doing* thou shalt save thyself. Work out your own salvation. *We are not sufficient*

of ourſelves to think any thing as of ourſelves. The Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law. —*God juſtifieth the ungodly and him that worketh not.* He ſhall render to every man according to his works, even eternal life to them who by patient continuance in well doing ſeek for glory.—*God forbid that I ſhould glory in any thing ſave in the croſs of Chriſt.* As the truth of God is in me, no man ſhall ſtop me of this glorying, that I have kept myſelf from being burdenſome.—*I am the chief of ſinners.* I have lived in all good conſcience before God until this day. *We rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus and have no confidence in the fleſh.* Our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity we have had our converſation in the world.—*Not by works of righteouſneſs that we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us: Not of works leſt any man ſhould boaſt; for if it is of works, then it is no more grace, otherwiſe work is no more work.* I keep under my body leſt I myſelf ſhould be a caſt away. Be not deceived, whatſoever a man ſoweth that ſhall he alſo reap; he that ſoweth little ſhall reap little; he that ſoweth to the ſpirit ſhall of the ſpirit reap life everlaſting.—*I am perſuaded that neither death, nor life, neither things preſent nor things to come, &c. ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus.* Thoſe that fall away crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame; for the earth which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto curſing, whoſe end is to be burned. Some of the branches were broken off by unbelief, thou ſtandeſt by faith; be not high-minded but fear; continue in God's goodneſs otherwiſe thou alſo ſhalt be cut off.

Now, Sir, permit me to beg you would lay your hand upon your heart, and ſay whether malicious infidels have not a fairer ſhow of reaſon to raiſe wicked men againſt St. Paul, than you have to raiſe good men againſt Mr. W.? And whether a grain of the candor with which you would reconcile the *ſeeming* * contra-

* Moſt of theſe *ſeeming* inconſiſtencies of St. Paul, and thoſe which are charged upon Mr. W. will be reconciled with the greateſt eaſe,

contradictions of the great apostle, would not be more than sufficient to reconcile the *seeming* inconsistencies of the great minister whom you have so warmly attacked?

Some persons indeed complain aloud that "Mr. W. in his new scheme of salvation by works, as a condition, fairly renounces Christ's blood and righteousness." I grant that the words "blood and righteousness" are not found in the Minutes, but *acceptance by believing in Christ* is found there, and he must be a caviller indeed who asserts that he means a Christ without blood, or a Christ without righteousness. Besides, when he cuts off *the merit of works* from having any share in our salvation, far from forgetting the meritorious life and death of the Redeemer, he effectually guards them, and the Protestant ark, sprinkled with the atoning blood, from the rash touches of all merit-mongers.* Add to this, that Mr. W. has sufficiently declared his faith in the atonement, in thousands of sermons and hymns, some of which are continually sung both by him and the *real Protestants*, so that *out of their own mouth* their groundless charge may be refuted.

Again, the doctrine of the atonement had been fully discussed in former Conferences and Minutes, and Mr. W. is too methodical to bring the same thing over and over again, nor is it reasonable to expect it should be peculiarly insisted upon in a charge against Antinomians, who rather abuse than deny it. Once more, Mr. W's extract of the Minutes is a memorandum of what was said in the latter part of a Conference or Conversation, and no unprejudiced person will maintain, that those who do not expressly mention the atonement in every conversation do actually renounce it.

To conclude, if the author of the Minutes had advanced the following propositions which you have dropped in your second sermon you might have had some

ease, by considering the two axioms mentioned in my first letter. In the former part of the imaginary contradictions, those servants of God make use of the first gospel-axiom, in the latter part they employ the second, and thus declare the whole counsel of God.

* The name that bishop Latimer gives to the Papists.

some reason to suspect his not doing the atonement justice. Page 36. "Christ only did that to the human nature which Adam (had he stood upright) would have done." What! Sir, would Adam have died for his posterity, or did not Christ die for them? You add, "See the true reason of his death; that he might subdue the earthly life in every sense."—And Page 45, "He certainly died for no other end, but that we might receive the Spirit of holiness." Mr. W. is of a very different sentiment, Sir; for poor heretic! he believes with the Papists that *Christ died to make an atonement for us*, and with St. John, that "he is the propitiation for our sins and for the sins of the whole world." Nevertheless he will not cry out "dreadful heresy" though he will probably think that you was once a little too deeply in Mr. Law's sentiments. Leaving you to think with how much justice I might descant here upon this line of the satyric poet, "*Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas.*" I remain, Rev. and dear Sir, Your's, &c.

J. FLETCHER.

Third LETTER to the Rev. Mr. SHIRLEY.

Honoured and Rev. Sir,

WE have seen how exceedingly commendable was Mr. W's design in writing what you have extracted from his last Minutes; and how far from being unanswerable are the *general* objections, which some have moved against them. Let us now proceed to a candid inquiry into the true meaning of the propositions. They are thus prefaced:

We said in 1774, "*We have leaned too much toward Calvinism,*" *Wherein?*

This single sentence is enough, I grant, to make some persons account Mr. W. an heretic. He is no Calvinist! And what is still more *dreadful*, he has the assurance to say that he has *leaned too much towards Calvinism!* This will sound like a double heresy in their ear; but not in *your's*, Sir, who seem to carry your

your anti-calviniſtical notions farther than Mr. W. himſelf. He never ſpoke more clearly to the point of *free grace* than you do, page 85, of your ſermons; "God, ſay you, never left himſelf without witneſs, not only from the viſible things of the creation, but likewiſe from the inward witneſs, a ſpiritual ſeed of light ſown in the ſoul of every ſon of man, Jew, Turk or Pagan, as well as Chriſtian, whoſe kindly ſuſcitations whoever follows, will gradually perceive increaſing gleams ſtill leading farther on to nearer and far brighter advances, till at length a full and perfect day burſts forth upon his raviſhed eyes." In this ſingle ſentence, Sir, you bear the nobleſt teſtimony to all the doctrines in which Mr. W. diſſents from the Calviniſts: you begin with *general redemption*, and end with *perfection*, or to uſe your own expreſſion you follow him *from the ſpiritual ſeed of light in a Turk*, quite to the *full and perfect day, burſting forth upon the raviſhed eyes of the Pagan* who *follows the kindly ſuſcinations* of divine grace.

And far from making man a mere machine, you tell us, page 140, "It is true, that faith is the gift of God, but the exertions of that faith, when once given, lieth in ourſelves." Mr. W. grants it, Sir; but permit me to tell you, that the word *ourſelves* being printed in italics, ſeems to convey rather more anti-calviniſm than he holds; for he is perſuaded that we cannot exert faith without a continual influence of the ſame divine power that produced it. it being evident upon the goſpel plan, that *without Chriſt we can do nothing*. From theſe and the like paſſages in your ſermons, I conclude, Sir, that your charge of *dreadful hereſy* does not reſt upon theſe words, "We have leaned too much towards Calviniſm." Paſs we then to the next, in which Mr. W. begins to ſhew wherein he has conſented too much to the Calviniſts.

I. "*With regard to man's faithfulneſs. Our Lord himſelf taught us to uſe the expreſſion. And we ought never to be aſhamed of it. We ought ſteadily to aſſert, on his authority, that if a man is not faithful in the unrighteous mammon, God will not give him the true riches.*"

Now,

Now, where does the hereſy lie here? Is it in the word *man's faithfulneſs?* Is there ſo much *faithfulneſs* to God and man among profeſſors, that he muſt be *oppoſed* by all good men, who dares to uſe the bare word? Do *real Proteſtants* account *man's faithfulneſs* a grace of ſupererogation, and quoting ſcripture an hereſy? Or do they ſlight what our Lord recommends in the plaineſt terms, and will one day reward in the moſt glorious manner? If not, why are they going to enter a proteſt againſt Mr. W. becauſe "he is not aſhamed of Chriſt and his words before an evil and adulterous generation, and will not keep back from his immenſe flock, any part of the counſel of God,"—— much leſs a part that ſo many profeſſors overlook, while ſome are daring enough to lampoon it, and others wicked enough to trample it under foot.

O, Sir, if Mr. W. is to be caſt out of your ſynagogue unleſs he *formerly recants* the paſſage he has quoted, and which he ſays "we are not to be aſhamed of;" what will you do to the Son of God, who ſpoke it? What to St. Luke who wrote it? And what to good Mr. Henry, who thus comments upon it? "If we do not make a right uſe of the gifts of God's providence, how can we expect from him thoſe preſent and future comforts which are the gifts of his ſpiritual grace? Our Saviour here compares theſe; and ſhews, that though our faithful uſe of the things of this world cannot be thought to merit any favour at the hand of God, yet our unfaithfulneſs in the uſe of them may be juſtly reckoned a *forfeiture* of that grace which is neceſſary to bring us to glory. And that is it which our Saviour ſhews, Luke xvi. 10, 11, 12. He that is unjuſt, *unfaithful* in the *leaſt*; is unjuſt, *unfaithful* alſo in *much*. The riches of this world are the *leſs*; grace and glory are the *greater*. Now if we be unfaithful in the leſs, if we uſe the things of this world to other purpoſes than thoſe for which they were given us, it may juſtly be feared we ſhall be ſo in the gifts of God's grace, that we will receive them alſo in vain, and therefore they will be denied us. He that is faithful in that which is leaſt, is faithful alſo in much. He that

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ſerves God and does good with his money, will ſerve God and do good with the more noble and valuable talents of wiſdom and grace, and ſpiritual gifts, and the earneſts of heaven; but he that buries the one talent of this world's wealth, will never improve the five talents of ſpiritual riches."

Thus ſpeaks the honeſt commentator: and whoever charges him with legality or hereſy herein, I muſt expreſs my intire approbation by a ſhout of applauſe. Hail Henry! Hail Weſley! Ye faithful ſervants of the moſt high God: ſtand it out againſt an Antinomian world: hail ye followers of the deſpiſed Galilean: you confeſs him and his words before a perverſe generation, he will confeſs you before his Father and his angels. Let not the ſcoffs, let not the accuſations, even of good people, led by the tempter, appearing as an angel of light, make you give up one jot or tittle of your Lord's goſpel. Though thouſands ſhould combine to brand you as Legaliſts, Papiſts, Heretics, and Antichriſts, ſtand it out: ſcripture, conſcience, and Jeſus are on your ſide: be not afraid of their terror, but ſanctify the Lord God in your hearts. And when you ſhall have *occupied* a little longer, and been a little more abuſed by your miſtaken companions, your Maſter will come and find you employed in ſerving his family, and not in *beating your fellow ſervants*. And while the unprofitable, unfaithful, quarrelſome ſervant is caſt out, he will addreſs you with a "Welcome, good and faithful ſervants: Ye have been faithful over a few things; I will make you rulers over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord."

Excuſe the length of this addreſs: it dropped from me before I was aware, and is the fruit of the joy I feel to ſee, "the John Goodwin of the age," and the oracle of the Calviniſts, ſo fully agree to maintain the Chriſtian *hereſy* againſt the Antinomian orthodoxy. Nay, and you, yourſelf, are of the very ſame way of thinking. For you tell us (page 89) "that God ſo far approved of the advances Cornelius had made towards him (by praying and giving, as you had obſerved before, much alms to the people) under the ſlender light offered him;

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of his earneſt deſire of a ſtill nearer and more intimate acquaintance with him, and of the improvements he had made of the ſmall talent he had committed to him, that he was now about to entruſt him with greater and far better treaſures."

In the mouth of two ſuch witneſſes as Mr. Henry and yourſelf, Mr. W's doctrine might be eſtabliſhed; but as I fear that ſome of our friends, will ſoon look upon you both as tainted with his hereſy; I ſhall produce ſome plain ſcripture-inſtances, to prove by the ſtrongeſt of all arguments, *matter of fact*, that man's *unfaithfulneſs in the mammon of unrighteouſneſs* is attended with the worſt of conſequences.

You know, Sir, what deſtruction this ſin brought upon Achan, and by his means upon Iſrael: and you remember how Saul's avarice, and his *flying upon the ſpoil* of the Amalekites, coſt him his kingdom, together with the divine bleſſing. You will perhaps object that "they forfeited only temporal mercies:" true, if they repented; but if their ſin ſealed up the hardneſs of their heart, then they loſt all.

I can however mention two who indiſputably forfeited both ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings: the one is, the moral young man, whoſe fatal attachment to wealth is mentioned in the goſpel. "Go, ſaid our Lord to him, ſell all thou haſt, give to the poor, come, follow me, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven." He was unfaithful in the mammon of unrighteouſneſs; he would not comply with the propoſal, and though Jeſus loved him, yet he ſtood firm to his word, he did not give him the true riches: the unhappy wretch choſe to have his good things in this world, and ſo loſt them in the next.

The other inſtance is that of Judas; *he left all*, at firſt, *to follow Jeſus*; but when the devil placed him upon the high mountain of temptation, and ſhewed him the horrors of poverty and the alluring wealth of this world, covetouſneſs his beſetting ſin prevailed again: and as he carried the bag, he turned thief, and made a private purſe. You know, Sir, that the love of money proved to him the root of all evil, and that on account of his unfaithfulneſs in the mammon of unrighteouſneſs, our

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Lord not only did not give him the true riches, but took his every talent from him, his apoſtleſhip on earth, and one of the twelve thrones which he had promiſed him in common with the other diſciples.

Some, I know, will excuſe Judas by fathering his crime and damnation upon the decrees of God. But we, who are not numbered among *real Proteſtants*, think that ſinners are reprobated as they are elected, that is, ſays St. Peter, "according to the foreknowledge of God:" we are perſuaded, that becauſe God's knowledge is *infinite*, he foreknows future contingencies; and we think, we ſhould inſult both his holineſs and his omniſcience, if we did not believe that he could both foreſee and foretell that Judas would be unfaithful, without neceſſitating him to be ſo, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled: we aſſert then that as Jeſus loved the poor covetous young man, ſo he loved his poor covetous diſciple: for had he hated him, he muſt have acted the baſe part of a diſſembler, by ſhewing him for years as much love as he did the other apoſtles; an idea too horrid for a Chriſtian to entertain, I ſhall not ſay of God made fleſh, but even of a man that has any ſincerity or truth. Judas's damnation therefore, and the ruin of the young man, according to the ſecond axiom in the goſpel, were merely of themſelves, by their unbelief and unfaithfulneſs of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs; for how could they believe, ſeeing they repoſed their truſt in uncertain riches!

Thus, Sir, both the expreſs declaration of our Lord, and the plain hiſtories of the Scripture, agree to confirm this fundamental principle in Chriſtianity, that when God works upon man, he expects faithfulneſs from man; and that when man, as a moral agent, grieves and quenches the Spirit, that ſtrives to make him faithful, temporal and eternal ruin are the inevitable conſequence.

Thus far then, the Minutes contain a great, evangelical Truth, and not a ſhadow of hereſy. Let us ſee whether the dreadful ſnake lurks under the ſecond propoſition.

II. "*We have leaned too much towards Calviniſm, 2. With regard to working for life. This alſo our Lord has expreſsly commanded us. Labour,* (Ἐργαζεσθε, *literally, work*) *for the meat that endureth to everlaſting life. And in fact every believer, till he comes to glory, works for as well as from life.*"

Here Mr. W. ſtrikes at a fatal miſtake of all Antinomians, many honeſt Calviniſts, and not a few who are Arminians in ſentiment and Calviniſts in practice. All theſe, when they ſee that man is by nature dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, lie eaſy in the mire of iniquity, idly waiting till by an irreſiſtible act of omnipotence, God pulls them out without any ſtriving on their part. Multitudes uncomfortably ſtick here, and will probably continue to do ſo, till they receive and heartily embrace that part of the goſpel which is *now* alas! called *hereſy*. Then ſhall theſe poor priſoners in giant Deſpair's caſtle, find the key of their dungeon about them, and perceive that "the word is nigh them, yea, in their mouth and in their heart; ſtirring up the gift of God within them, and in hope believing againſt hope, they will happily lay hold of eternal life, and apprehend, by the confidence of faith, him that has apprehended them by convictions of ſin."

But now, inſtead of imitating Lazarus, who when the Lord had called him, and reſtored life to his putrifying body, *came forth* out of his grave, though he was *bound hand and foot*; theſe miſtaken men indolently wait till the Lord drags them out, not conſidering that it is more than he has promiſed to do. On the contrary, he reproves by his prophet, thoſe that "do not ſtir themſelves up to lay hold on him;" and deciding the point himſelf, ſays, "Turn ye at my reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit upon you; becauſe I called and ye refuſed, I ſtretched out my hands unto you and no man regarded, I will mock when your fear cometh."

Should you object, that the caſe is not ſimilar, becauſe the Lord gave life to the dead body of Lazarus, whereas our ſouls are *dead in ſin by nature*. True, Sir, *by nature*; but does not *grace reign* to controul nature?

ture? And "as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, is not the free gift come upon all men to justification of life?" According to the promise made to our first parents, and of course to all men then contained in their loins, is not *the seed of the woman* always *nigh*, both to reveal and *bruise the serpent's head?* Is not Christ *the light of men,—the light of the world,—come into the world? Shineth he* not *in the darkness* of our nature, even when *the darkness comprehends* him not? And is not this *light the life*, the spiritual life *of men?* Can this be denied, if the *light is Christ*, and if *Christ is the resurrection and the life*, "*who came that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly?*"

In this scriptural view of *free grace*, what room is there for the ridiculous cavil, that "Mr. W. wants the dead to work for life?" God of his infinite mercy in Jesus Christ, gives to poor sinners naturally dead in sin, *a talent* of free, preventing, quickening grace, which *reproves them of sin*; and when it is followed, *of righteousness and judgment*. This, which some Calvinists call common grace, is granted to all without any respect of persons; so that even the poor Jew Herod, if he had not preferred the smiles of his Herodias to the convincing light of Christ, which shone in his conscience, would have been saved as well as John the Baptist; and that poor Heathen Felix, if he had not hardened his heart in the day of his visitation, would have sweetly experienced that Christ had as much tasted death for him as he did for St. Paul. The living light visited them; but they not *working while it was day*, or refusing to *cut off the right hand* which the Lord called for, fell at last into that *night wherein no man can work*; "*their candlestick was removed, their lamp went out.*" They quenched their *smoking flax*, or in other words *their talent* unimproved *was* justly *taken from them*. Thus, though once through grace they could work, they died while they lived; and so were, as says St. Jude, *twice dead*, dead in Adam by that sentence, "*in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely*

surely die;" and dead in themselves, by personally renouncing Christ the life, or rejecting the light of his convincing Spirit.

This being premised, I ask, Where is the heresy in this paragraph of the Minutes? Does it consist in quoting a plain passage out of one of our Lord's sermons? Or in daring to produce in the original, under the horrible form of the decagrammaton, Ἐργαζεσθε that dreadful tetragrammaton *work?* Surely, Sir, you have too much piety to maintain the former, and too much good sense to assert the latter. Does it consist in saying that *believers* work *from life?* (for of such only Mr. W. here speaks) Does not all grant that *he who believeth hath life*, yea, *everlasting life*, and therefore can work? And have not I proved from Scripture, that the very Heathens are not without some light and grace to work suitably to their dispensation?

The heresy, say you, does not consist in asserting that the believer works *from*, but *for* life. Does it indeed? Then the Lord Jesus is the *heretic*; for Mr. W. only repeats what he spoke above 1700 years ago: Labour, says he, (Ἐργαζεσθε) *work for the meat that endureth to everlasting life.* Enter therefore *your protest against* St. John's gospel, if Christ will not *formally recant* it; and not against the Minutes of his servant, who dares not *take away from his Lord's words*, for fear *God should take away his part out of the book of life!*

But if the Son of God is an heretic for putting the unbelieving Jews upon *working* by that dreadful word (Ἐργαζεσθε) St. Paul is undoubtedly an arch heretic, for corroborating it by a strong preposition: (Κατεργαζεσθε) says he to the Philippians, *work out*—and what is most astonishing, *work out your own salvation. Your own salvation!* Why, Paul, this is even worse than working *for life*; for *salvation* implies a deliverance from all guilt, sin, and misery; together with obtaining the life of grace here, and the life of glory hereafter. Ah! poor legal apostle, what a pity is it, thou didst not live in our evangelical age! Some by explaining to

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thee the myſtery of *finiſhed ſalvation*, or by *proteſting in a body againſt thy dreadful hereſy*, might have ſaved *the fundamental doctrines of Chriſtianity*; and the John Goodwin of the age would not have had thee to bear him out in his phariſaical, and papiſtical deluſions!

Here you reply, that "St. Paul gives God all the glory by maintaining that "*it is he who works in us both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.*" And does not Mr. W. do the ſame? Has he not for near forty years ſteadily aſſerted, that all power to think a good thought, much more to will or do a good work, is from God, by mere grace, through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt, and the agency of the holy Spirit? If any dares to deny it, myriads of witneſſes who have heard him preach, and thouſands of printed ſermons, hymns, and tracts diſperſed through the three kingdoms, will prove it groſsly.

But let us come cloſer to the point. Is not Chriſt "*the bread that came down from heaven to give life to the world?*"—Is he not "*the meat that endureth to everlaſting life!*" *The meat which* he directs even to the poor Capernaites to *work for?* Muſt we not *come* to him for that meat? Is not *coming* to Chriſt, a *work* of the heart? Yea, *the work of God?* The work that God peculiarly calls for? John vi. 28, 29. Does not our Lord complain of thoſe who will not work for life? That is, "*come unto him that they might have life*, or *that they might have it more abundantly?*" And muſt not every believer *do this work*—come to Chriſt for life, yea and live upon him every day and every hour?

Again, Sir, conſider theſe Scriptures, "He that believeth hath everlaſting life; He that hath the Son hath life;" Compare them with the following complaint, "None ſtirreth up himſelf to lay hold on God;" and with the charge of St. Paul to Timothy, "Lay hold on eternal life;" and let us know, whether ſtirring up oneſelf to lay hold on the God of our life, and actually laying hold on eternal life, are not *works*, and works *for*, as well as *from life?* And whether believers are diſpenſed from theſe works till they come to glory?

Once more; please to tell us, if praying, using ordinances, running a race, taking up the cross, keeping under the body, wrestling, fighting a good fight, are not works; and if all believers are not to do them, till death brings them a discharge? If you say, that "they do them *from life* and not *for life*," you still point blank oppose our Lord's express declaration.

A similar instance will make you sensible of it. Lot flies out of Sodom. How many works does he do at once! He hearkens to God's messengers, obeys their voice, sacrifices his property, forsakes all, prays, runs, and escapes for his life. No, says one, wiser than seven men who can render a reason, "You should not say, that he escapes *for* life, but *from* life: do not hint, that he runs "to preserve his life;" you should say that he does it "because he is alive." What an admirable distinction is this!

Again; my friend is consumptive. I send for a Physician who prescribes "he must ride out every day *for* his life." Some other Physicians see the prescription, and by printed letters raise all the gentlemen of the faculty, to insist in a body on a formal recantation of this dreadful prescription; declaring the health of thousands is at stake, if we say that consumptive people are to ride *for* life, as well as *from* life. *Risum teneatis amici?*

But they who protest, against Mr. W. for maintaining that we ought to work *for* as well as *from* life, must protest also against a body of Puritan Divines, who in the last century being shocked at Dr. Crisp's doctrine, thus bore their testimony against it. "To say salvation is not the end of any good work we do, or, we are to act *from* life and not *for* life, were to abandon the human nature; it were to teach us to violate the great precepts of the gospel; it supposes one bound to do more for the salvation of others, than our own; 'twere to make all the threatenings of eternal death, and promises of eternal life in the gospel, useless, as motives to shun the one, or obtain the other: and it makes the scripture-characters and commendation of the most eminent saints, a fault;" for they all escaped out of

Sodom

Sodom or Babylon for their lives; they all wreſtled for, and "*laid hold on eternal life.*" Preface to Mr. Flavel's book againſt Antinomianiſm. Thus, Sir, the very Calviniſts were aſhamed a hundred years ago, of the grand Criſpian tenet that we ought not to work *for life.*

And I am glad to find, you are as far from this error as they were; for you tell us in your ſermons, page 69, that "The gracious end of Chriſt's coming into the world was to give eternal *life* to thoſe who were *dead* in ſins, and that eternal life does conſiſt in knowing the true God and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent:" you aſſure us next, that this life begins by "an exploring deſire," and that God by giving it, "only means to be earneſtly ſought, that he may be more ſucceſsfully and more happily found."

Perhaps ſome ſuppoſe the expreſſion of working *for* life, implies the working in order to *merit* or *purchaſe* life. But, as our Lord's words convey no ſuch idea, ſo Mr. W. takes care poſitively to exclude it, by thoſe words, *Not by the merit of works:* for he knows that *eternal life is the gift of God*; and yet with St. Paul he ſays, "Labour to enter into reſt, leſt ye fall after the example of Iſrael's unbelief:" and with the great anticriſpian Divine Jeſus Chriſt, he cries aloud, *Strive* to walk *in the narrow way;—agonize to enter in at the ſtrait gate that leads to life.*

I paſs to the third inſtance which he produces of his having leaned too much towards Calviniſm.

III. "*We have received it as a maxim, that "a man is to do nothing in order to juſtification:" nothing can be more falſe. Whoever deſires to find favour with God ſhould ceaſe from evil and learn to do well. Whoever repents, ſhould do works meet for repentance. And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for?*"

To do Mr. W. juſtice, it is neceſſary to conſider what he means by Juſtification. And firſt, he does not mean, that general benevolence of our merciful God towards ſinful mankind, whereby, through the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world, he caſts

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a propitious look upon them, and freely makes them partakers of the light that enlightens every man that cometh into the world. This general loving-kindneſs is certainly previous to any thing we can do to find it; for it always prevents us, ſaying to us in our very infancy, *live*; and when we turn from the paths of life, ſtill crying, *Why will ye die?* In conſequence of this general mercy our Lord ſays, "Let little children come unto me: for of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven." Much leſs does Mr. W. underſtand what Dr. Criſp calls *eternal juſtification*, which, becauſe I do not ſee it in the Scripture, I ſhall ſay nothing of.

But the Juſtification he ſpeaks of, as ſomething that we muſt *find*, and *in order to which ſomething muſt be done*, is either that public and final Juſtification which our Lord mentions in the goſpel, "By thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned;" and in this ſenſe no man in his wits will find fault with Mr. W's aſſertion; as it is evident that we muſt abſolutely *do ſomething*, that is, ſpeak good words, in order to be *juſtified by our words*. Or he means forgiveneſs, and the witneſs of it; that wonderful tranſaction of the Spirit of God, in a returning prodigal's conſcience, by which the forgiveneſs of his ſin is proclaimed to him through the blood of ſprinkling.—This is what Mr. W. and St. Paul generally mean. It is thus, that "Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt."

And now do not Scripture, common ſenſe, and experience, ſhew, that *ſomething muſt be done in order* to *attain*, or *find*, though not to *merit* and *purchaſe*, this Juſtification?

Pleaſe to anſwer the following queſtions founded upon the expreſs declarations of God's word. "To him that ordereth his converſation aright, will I ſhow the ſalvation of God." Is ordering our converſation aright, doing nothing?—"Repent ye, and be converted, that your ſin may be blotted out." Are *repentance and converſion* nothing? "Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt." I will juſtify you. Is *coming* doing nothing? "Ceaſe

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to do evil, learn to do well: Come now, let us reason together, and though your sins be red as crimson they shall be white as snow," you shall be justified. Is *ceasing to do evil*, and learning to do well, doing nothing?—"Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Is *seeking*, *calling*, *forsaking one's way*, and *returning to the Lord*, *a mere nothing*?—"Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. Yea, take the kingdom of heaven by force." Is *seeking*, *asking*, *knocking*, and *taking by force*, doing absolutely nothing? Please to answer these questions, and when you have done, I'll throw one or two hundred more of the like-kind in your way.

Let us now see whether Reason is not for Mr. W. as well as Scripture. Do you not maintain that "*believing* is necessary in order to our Justification?" If you do, you subscribe Mr. W's heresy; for *believing* is not only doing *something*, but necessarily supposes *a variety of things*. *Faith cometh by hearing*, and sometimes by reading, which implies attending the ministry of the word, and searching the Scriptures, as the Bereans did. It likewise pre-supposes at least the attention of the mind, and consent of the heart, to a revealed truth; or the consideration, approbation, and receiving of an object proposed to us: nay, it implies renouncing worldly, and seeking divine honour: for, says our Lord, "How can you believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh of God only." And if none can believe in Christ unto salvation, but those who give up seeking worldly honours, by a parity of reason, they must give up following fleshly lusts, and putting their trust in uncertain riches: in a word, they must own themselves sick, and renounce their Physicians of no value, before they can make one true application to the invaluable Physician. What a variety of things is therefore implied in *believing*,

lieving, which we cannot but acknowledge previous to Juſtification! Who can then conſiſtently with reaſon, blame Mr. W. for ſaying *ſomething* muſt be done in order to Juſtification?

Again, if nothing is required of us in order to Juſtification, who can find fault with thoſe that die in a ſtate of condemnation? They were *born in ſin and children of wrath*, and nothing was required of them in order to find favour: it remains therefore, that they are—damned, through an abſolute decree, made thouſands of years before they had any exiſtence! If ſome can ſwallow this camel with the greateſt eaſe, I doubt, Sir, it will not go down with *you*, without bearing very hard upon the knowledge you have of the God of Love, and the Goſpel of Jeſus.

Once more: Mr. W. concludes his propoſition by a very pertinent queſtion: "*When a man*, that is not juſtified, *does works meet for repentance, what does he do them for?*" Permit me to anſwer it according to Scripture and common ſenſe. If he does them in order to *purchaſe* the divine favour, he is under a ſelf-righteous deluſion; but if he does them, as Mr. W. ſays *in order to find* what Chriſt hath purchaſed for him, he acts the part of a wiſe Proteſtant.

Should you ſay that ſuch a penitent does works meet for repentance, from a ſenſe of gratitude for redeeming love: I anſwer, this is impoſſible; for that love muſt be ſhed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Ghoſt given unto him, in conſequence of his juſtification, before he can act from the ſenſe of that love and the gratitude which it excites. I hope, it is no hereſy to maintain, that the cauſe muſt go before the effect. I conclude then, that thoſe who have not yet found the pardoning love of God, do works meet for repentance, *in order to find it*. They abſtain from thoſe outward evils which once they purſued; they do the outward good which the convincing ſpirit prompts them to; they uſe the means of grace, confeſs their ſins, and aſk pardon for them; in ſhort, they *ſeek* the Lord, encouraged by that promiſe, "They that ſeek me early ſhall find me." And Mr. W. ſuppoſes they ſeek *in order to find*;

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in the name of candour where is the harm, of that ſuppoſition?

When the poor woman has loſt her *piece of ſilver*, *ſhe lights a candle*, ſays our Lord, ſhe *ſweeps the houſe and ſearches diligently till ſhe find it.* Mr. W. aſks, *If ſhe does not do* all *this in order to find it*, what does ſhe do it for? At this the alarm is taken, and the poſt carries through various provinces printed letters againſt old Mordecai, and a ſynod is called together, to *proteſt* againſt the dreadful error.

This reminds me of a little anecdote. Some centuries ago one Virgilius (I think) a German biſhop, was bold enough to look over the walls of ignorance and ſuperſtition, which then incloſed all Europe. And he ſaw, that if the earth was round, there muſt be antipodes. Some Minutes of his obſervations were ſent to the Pope. His Holineſs, who underſtood geography as much as divinity, took fright, fancying the unheard of aſſertion was injurious to the very fundamental principles of Chriſtianity. He directly called together the Cardinals, as wiſe as himſelf, and by their advice, iſſued out a Bull, condemning the heretical doctrine, and the poor Biſhop was obliged to make a formal recantation of it, under pain of excommunication. Which are we to admire moſt? The zeal of the Conclave, or that of the *real Proteſtants?* In the mean time let me obſerve, that as all the Roman Catholics do now acknowledge, that there are antipodes, ſo all real Proteſtants will one day acknowledge, that penitents ſeek the favour of God *in order to find* it; unleſs ſome rare genius ſhould be able to demonſtrate, that it is *in order to loſe* it.

Having defended Mr. W's third propoſition from Scripture and common ſenſe, permit me to do it alſo from experience. And here I might appeal to the moſt eſtabliſhed perſons in Mr. W's Societies; but as their teſtimony may have little weight with you, I wave it, and appeal to all the accounts of *found* converſions that have been publiſhed ſince Calvin's days. Shew me one, Sir, wherein it appears that a mourner in Sion found the above-deſcribed juſtification, without *doing*

ſome

ſome previous *works meet for repentance.* If you cannot produce one ſuch inſtance, Mr. W's doctrine is ſupported by the *printed experiences* of all the converted Calviniſts, as well as of all the believers in his own Societies. Nor am I afraid to appeal even to the experience of your own friends. If any one of theſe can ſay with a good conſcience, that he found the above-deſcribed juſtification without firſt ſtopping in the career of outward ſin, without praying, ſeeking, and confeſſing his guilt and miſery, I promiſe to give up the Minutes. But if none can make ſuch a declaration, you muſt grant, Sir, that experience is on Mr. W's ſide, as much as reaſon, revelation, the beſt Calviniſts, and yourſelf. I ſay yourſelf.

Give me leave to produce but one inſtance. Page 76 of your Sermons, you addreſs thoſe *who ſee themſelves deſtitute of that knowledge of God which is eternal life*, the very ſame thing that Mr. W. calls Juſtification: and which you define, "A home felt knowledge of God by the experience of his love, being ſhed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt given unto us. The Spirit of God bearing witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God, and you recommend to them to *ſeek* and *preſs* after it." Now, Sir, *ſeeking* and *preſſing* after it, is certainly *doing ſomething in order to find it.*

I muſt not conclude my Vindication of the third propoſition, without anſwering a ſpecious objection. "If we muſt *do ſomething in order to juſtification*, farewell *free* juſtification: it is no more of grace but of works, and conſequently of debt. The middle wall of partition between the church of Rome, and the church of England, is pulled down, and the two ſticks in the hands of that heretical juggler, J. W. are become one."

I reply 1. that ſome who think they are *real* pillars in the *Proteſtant* church may be nearer the church of Rome than they are aware of: for Rome is far more remarkable for lording it over God's heritage, and calling the moſt faithful ſervants of God heretics, than even for her phariſaic exalting of good works.—

2. If

2. If the church of Rome had not insisted upon the necessity of *unrequired*, *unprofitable* and *foolish* works; and if she had not arrogantly ascribed *saving merit* to works, yea to merely external performances, and by that means clouded the merits of Christ; no reasonable Protestant would have separated from her on account of her regard for works. 3. Nothing can be more absurd than to affirm that when *something is required to be done in order to receive a favour, the favour loses the name of a free gift, and directly becomes a debt.* Long, too long, persons who have more honesty than wisdom, have been frighted from the plain path of duty by a phantom of their own making. O may the snare break at last! And why should it not break *now?* Have not sophisms been wire-drawn, till they break of themselves in the sight of every attentive spectator?

I say to two beggars, Hold out your hand; here is an alms for you. The one complies, and the other refuses. Who in the world will dare to say, that my charity is no more a *free-gift*, because I bestow it only upon the man that held out his hand? Will nothing make it *free* but my wrenching his hand open, or forcing my bounty down his throat? Again, the king says to four rebels, throw down your arms; surrender, and you shall have a place, both in my favour and at court. One of them obeys and becomes a great man; the others upon refusal are caught and hanged. What sophister will face me down, that the pardon and place of the former, are not *freely* bestowed upon him, because he did something in order to obtain them? Once more,

The God of Providence says, If you plow, sow, harrow, fence, and weed your fields, I will give the increase, and you shall have a crop. Farmers obey: and are they to believe, that because they do so many things towards their harvest, it is *not the free gift* of heaven? Do not all those who fear God, know that their ground, seed, cattle, strength, yea, and their very life, are the gifts of God? Does not this prevent their claiming a crop as a *debt?* And make them confess, that though it was suspended on their plowing, &c. it is the unmerited bounty of Heaven?

Apply this, Sir, to the prefent cafe, and you will fee that our *doing fomething in order to juſtification*, does not in the leaſt hinder it from being a *free-gift*; becauſe whatever we do in order to it, we do it *by the grace of God* preventing us, that we may have a good-will, and working with us when we have that good-will; all being of free, moſt abſolutely free grace, through the merits of Chriſt. And nevertheleſs ſo ſure as a farmer, in the appointed ways of Providence, ſhall have *no* harveſt if he does nothing towards it; a profeſſor in the appointed ways of grace (let him *talk* of finiſhed ſalvation all the year round) ſhall go without juſtification and ſalvation, unleſs he does ſomething towards them. "He that now goeth on his way weeping, ſays the Pſalmiſt, and beareth forth good ſeed, ſhall doubtleſs come again with joy, and bring his ſheaves with him." "Be not deceived, ſays the Apoſtle, whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap; and he *only* that ſoweth to the ſpirit, ſhall of the ſpirit reap life everlaſting." David therefore, and St. Paul, muſt be proved enemies to free grace, before Mr. W. can be repreſented as ſuch; for they both *ſowed in tears* before they *reaped in joy*: their doctrine and experience went hand in hand together.

Having now vindicated the three firſt Propoſitions of the Minutes, levelled at three dangerous tenets of Dr. Criſp, and ſhewn, that not only yourſelf, Sir, but moderate Calviniſts are (ſo far) intirely of Mr. W's ſentiment; I remain, Hon. and Rev. Sir, your obedient ſervant, in the bond of a free and peaceful goſpel.

J. FLETCHER.

Fourth LETTER to the Rev. Mr. SHIRLEY.

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

IF the three firſt Propoſitions of the Minutes are Scriptural, Mr. W. may well begin the remaining part, by deſiring the Preachers in his Connection to emerge along with him from under the noiſy billows of prejudice,

judice, and to struggle quite out of the muddy streams of Antinomian delusions, which have so long gone over our heads, and carried so many souls down the channels of vice, into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Well may he intreat them to "*Review the whole affair.*"

And why should this modest request, alarm any one? Though error dreads a revisal, truth, you know, cannot but gain by it.

I. Mr. W. says in this *review*, 1. "*Who is now accepted of God? He that now believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart.*" Excellent answer! Worthy of St. Paul and St. James; for it sums up in one line the epistles of both. In the first part of it, *(He that now believes in Christ)* you see St. Paul's Gospel calculated for lost sinners, who now fly from the babel of self-righteousness and sin, and find *all things* in Christ *ready* for their reception. And in the second part, *(with a loving and obedient heart)* you see the strong bulwark raised by St. James, to guard the truth of the Gospel against the attacks of Antinomian and Laodicean professors. Had he said, "he that shall believe the next hour is *now* accepted," he would have bestowed upon present unbelief the blessing that is promised to present faith. Had he said "he that believed a year ago, is now accepted of God," he would have opened the kingdom of heaven to apostates, contrary to St. Paul's declarations to the Hebrews. He therefore very properly says, *he that now believes*; for it is written, *he that believeth*, (not he that *shall* believe, or he that *did* believe) *hath everlasting life.*

What fault can you then find, with Mr. W. here? Surely you cannot blame him for proposing Christ as the object of the Christian's faith, or for saying that the *believer* hath a loving and obedient heart; for he speaks of the *accepted* man, and not of him who *comes for acceptance.* Multitudes alas! rest satisfied with an *unloving disobedient* faith,—a faith that engages only the head, but has nothing to do with the *heart*;—a faith that works by malice, instead of *working by love*;—a faith that pleads for sin in the heart, instead of puri-

fying the heart from sin;—a faith that St. Paul explodes, 1 Cor. xiii. 2; and that St. James compares to a carcass, ii. 26. There is no need that Mr. W. should countenance such a faith by his Minutes. Too many alas! do it by their lives; and God grant none may do it by their Sermons. Whoever does, Sir, it is not you; for you tell us in your's, page 150, that "*Christ is to be found only by living faith; even a faith that worketh by love; even a faith that layeth hold of Christ by the feet, and worshippeth him;*"—the very faith of Mary Magdalen, who certainly had a *loving and obedient heart*, for our Lord testified that *she loved much*, and ardent love cannot but be zealously *obedient*. There is not then the least shadow of heresy, but the very marrow of the Gospel in this article. Let us see whether the second is equally defensible.

II. "*But who among those that never heard of Christ? He that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, according to the light he has.*"

And where is the error here? Did not St. Peter begin his evangelical Sermon to Cornelius by these very words, prefaced by some others that make them remarkably emphatical? "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him." Surely, Sir, you will never insist upon a formal recantation of a plain Scripture!

But perhaps you object to those words which Mr. W. has added to St. Peter's declaration, *according to the light he hath*. What should it be, "according to the light he has *not?*" Are not there people enough among us who follow the wicked servant that intimated his Lord was an hard and austere man, reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not straw'd? Must Mr. W. increase the number? Or would you have him insinuate that God is more cruel than Pharaoh, who granted the poor Israelites *day-light*, if he allowed them *no straw* to make bricks;—that he requires an Heathen to work without any degree of *light*, without a *day* of visitation, in the Egyptian darkness

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of a merely natural ſtate?—And that he will then damn and torment him everlaſtingly, either for not doing, or for marring his work? O Sir, like yourſelf, Mr. W. is too evangelical to entertain ſuch notions of the God of Love.

"At this rate, ſay ſome, an Heathen may be ſaved without a Saviour; his fearing God and working righteouſneſs will go for the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt." Mr. W. has no ſuch thought: whenever an Heathen is accepted, it is merely through the merits of Chriſt: although it is in conſequence of his fearing God and working righteouſneſs. But how comes he to ſee that God is to be feared, and that righteouſneſs is his delight? Becauſe a beam of our Sun of righteouſneſs ſhines in his darkneſs. All is therefore of grace, the light, the works of righteouſneſs done by that light, and acceptance in conſequence of them. How much more evangelical is this doctrine of St. Peter, than that of ſome Divines, who conſign all the Heathens by millions to hell torments, becauſe they cannot explicitly believe in a Saviour, whoſe name they never heard? Nay, and in whom it would be the greateſt arrogancy to believe, if he never died for them? Is it not poſſible that Heathens ſhould by grace, reap ſome bleſſings through Adam the ſecond, though they know nothing of his name and obedience unto death; when they, by nature, reap ſo many curſes through Adam the firſt, to whoſe name and diſobedience they are equally ſtrangers? If this is an *Hereſy* it is ſuch an one as does honour to Jeſus and Humanity.

2d Obj. "Mr. W. by allowing the poſſibility of a righteous Heathen's ſalvation, goes point blank againſt the 18th Article of our Church, which he has ſolemnly ſubſcribed."

Anſ. This aſſertion is groundleſs. Mr. W. far from preſuming to ſay that an Heathen "can be ſaved by the law or ſect that he profeſſes, if he frames his life according to the light of nature," cordially believes that all the Heathens who are ſaved, are ſo through the name, that is, through the merit and Spirit of Chriſt; by framing their life, not according to I know not

what light naturally received from fallen Adam, but according to the ſupernatural light which Chriſt graciouſly affords them, in the diſpenſation they are under.

3d. Obj. "However if he does not impugn the 18th Article, he does the 13th, which ſays, that "Works done before juſtification, or before the grace of Chriſt, and the inſpiration of his Spirit, foraſmuch as they proceed not from faith in Chriſt, are not pleaſant to God, yea have the nature of ſin."

Nay, this Article does not affect Mr. W's doctrine; for he conſtantly maintains, that if the works of a Melchiſedec, a Job, a Plato, a Cornelius, are accepted, it is only becauſe they follow the general juſtification above-mentioned: (which is poſſibly what St. Paul calls the Free Gift that came upon all men to juſtification of life, Rom. v. 18.) and becauſe they proceed from the grace of Chriſt and the inſpiration of his Spirit, they are not therefore done before the grace and inſpiration, as are the works which the Article condemns.

4th Obj. "But all that is not of faith is ſin, and without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God."

Anſ. True; therefore "he that cometh to God muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him." Cornelius had undoubtedly this faith, and a degree of it is found in all ſincere Heathens. For Chriſt, the light of men, viſits all, though in a variety of degrees and diſpenſations. He ſaid to the carnal Jews that believed not on him: "Yet a little while the light is with you; walk while ye have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon you: while ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of the light." All the Heathens that are ſaved, are then ſaved, by an implicit faith in Jeſus the light of the world; or, to uſe our Lord's own words, by believing in the light of their diſpenſation, before the day of their viſitation is paſt, before total darkneſs comes upon them, even the night when no man can work.

5th Obj. "But if Heathens can be ſaved without the Goſpel, what need is there of the Chriſtian diſpenſation?"

Anſ.

Anſ. 1. None of them were ever ſaved without a beam of the internal light of the Goſpel, which is preached in (*) every creature under heaven, Col. i. 23. 2. The argument may be retorted: if ſinners could be ſaved under the patriarchal diſpenſation, what need was there of the Moſaic? If under the Moſaic, what need of John's baptiſm? If under the baptiſm of John, what need of Chriſtianity? Or to anſwer by a compariſon: If we can ſee our way by ſtar-light, what need is there of moon-ſhine? If by moon-ſhine, what need of the dawn of day? If by the dawn of day, what need of the riſing-ſun?

The brightneſs of divine diſpenſations, like the light of the righteous, ſhines more and more unto the perfect day. And though an Heathen may be ſaved in his low diſpenſation, and attain unto a low degree of glory, which the Apoſtle compares to the ſhining of a ſtar, (for in my Father's houſe, ſays Chriſt, there are many manſions) yet it is an unſpeakable advantage to be ſaved from the darkneſs attending his uncomfortable diſpenſation, into the full enjoyment of the life and immortality brought to light by the explicit Goſpel. Well might then the angel ſay to Cornelius, who was already accepted according to his diſpenſation, that Peter ſhould tell him words whereby he ſhould be ſaved:—ſaved from the weakneſs, darkneſs, bondage, and tormenting fears attending his preſent ſtate, into that bleſſed ſtate of light, comfort, liberty, power, and glorious joy, where "he that is feeble is as David, and the houſe of David as God, or as the Angel of the Lord."

Having thus briefly anſwered the objections that are advanced againſt St. Peter's and Mr. W's doctrine, proceed we to the 3d query, in the review of the whole affair.

III. "*Is this the ſame with,—he that is ſincere? Nearly, if not quite.*"

In the name of charity where is the error of this anſwer? Where the ſhadow of hereſy? Do you ſuppoſe, by he that is ſincere, Mr. W. means a carnal unawakened

unawakened wretch, who boasts of his imaginary sincerity? No, Sir, he means one who, in God's account, and not barely in his own, sincerely and uprightly follows the light of his dispensation. Now, if you expose Mr. W. as guilty of heresy, for using this word once, what protests will you enter against St. Paul, for using it over and over? How will you blame him for desiring the Ephesians (according to the fine reading of our margin) to be sincere in love! αλη,θευοντες, εν αγαπη:—Or, for wishing nothing greater to his dear Philippians, than that they might be sincere in the day of Christ! Oh, Sir, to fear, and much more to love, the Lord in sincerity, is a great and rare thing, Eph. vi. 24. We find every where too much of the old leaven of malice, and too little of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, 1 Cor. v. 8. Think not therefore that Mr. W. betrays the cause of God, because he thinks that to be sincere, and to fear God and work righteousness, are expressions nearly if not quite synonymous.

But you do not perhaps find fault with Mr. W. for setting accepted Heathens too low, but too high, by giving them the character of being sincere. For you know that our translators render the Hebrew word [Thumim] sometimes *sincere*, at other times *upright*, *undefiled*, and most commonly *perfect*. As in these sentences, Noah was a perfect man, Job was a perfect man, &c. May not then Mr. W. secretly bring in his abominable doctrine of perfection, under the less frightful expression of sincerity? Of this more by and by.

In the mean time, I shall close my Vindication of the 2d. and 3d. query, by the sentiments of two unquestionable Protestants on the present subject. The one is Mr. Henry, in his comment on St. Peter's words, "God, says he, never did, nor never will reject an honest Gentile, who fears God and worships him, and works righteousness. i. e. is just and charitable towards all men, who lives up to the light he has, in a sincere devotion, and regular conversation.—Wherever God finds an upright man, he will be found an

upright

upright God. Pſalm xviii. 25.—And thoſe that have not the knowledge of Chriſt, and therefore cannot have an explicit regard to him, may yet receive grace for his ſake, to fear God, and work righteouſneſs; and wherever God gives grace to do ſo, as he did to Cornelius, he will, through Chriſt, accept the work of his own hands." Here, Sir, you have the very doctrine of Mr. W. quite down to the heretical word ſincere.

The other divine, Sir, is yourſelf. You tell us, in your Sermon on the ſame text, that "We cannot but admire, and adore God's univerſal tenderneſs, and pity for every people and nation under heaven, in that he willeth not the death of any ſingle ſinner, but accepteth every one into Goſpel-covenant with him, who feareth him and worketh righteouſneſs according to the light imparted to him."

Now, Sir, where is the difference between your orthodoxy and Mr. W's hereſy? He aſſerts, God accepts "him that fears God and works righteouſneſs according to the light he has:" Mr. Henry ſays, "him that lives up to the light he has:" and you, Sir, "him who feareth God and worketh righteouſneſs according to the light imparted to him." If Mr. W. muſt ſhare the fate of Shadrach for his hereſy, I doubt Mr. Henry will have that of Meſhech, and you, of Abednego; for you are all three in the ſame honourable condemnation.

But Mr. W. foreſeeing that ſome will be offended at St. Peter's evangelical declaration, concerning the acceptance of ſincere Heathens who work righteouſneſs, propoſes and anſwers the following objection.

IV. "*Is not this ſalvation by works? Not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition:*" In the former part of this anſwer, Mr. W. freely grants all you can require, to guard the Goſpel, againſt the Popiſh doctrine of making ſatisfaction for ſin, and meriting ſalvation by works: for he maintains that though God accepts the Heathen that works righteouſneſs, yet it is not through the merit of his works, but ſolely through that of Chriſt. Is not this the very doctrine of our

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church in the 11th Article which treats of Juſtification? "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt by faith, and not for our own works or deſervings." Does not the oppoſition of the two ſentences, and the explanatory word deſervings, evidently ſhew that works meet for repentance are not excluded from being in the ſinner that comes to be juſtified, but from having any merit or worth to purchaſe his juſtification?

Our church expreſſes herſelf more fully on this head in the homily on ſalvation, to which the article refers. "St. Paul, ſays ſhe, declares nothing [neceſſary] on the behalf of man concerning his juſtification, but only a true and lively faith, and yet (N. B.) that faith does not ſhut out repentance, hope, love [of deſire when we are coming, love of delight when we are come] dread, and the fear of God, to be joined with it in every man that is juſtified; but it ſhutteth them out from the office of juſtifying; ſo that they be all preſent together in him that is juſtified, yet they juſtify not all together." This is agreeable to St. Peter's doctrine, maintained by Mr. W. Only faith in Chriſt for Chriſtians, and faith in the light of their diſpenſation for Heathens, is neceſſary in order to acceptance: but though faith only juſtifies, yet it is never alone; for repentance, hope, love of deſire, and the fear of God, neceſſarily accompany this faith if it is living. Our church therefore is not at all againſt works proceeding from, or accompanying faith in all its ſtages. She grants, that whether faith ſeeks or finds its object, whether it longs for or embraces it, it is ſtill a lively, active, and working grace. She is only againſt the vain conceit that works have any hand in meriting juſtification or purchaſing ſalvation, which is what Mr. W. likewiſe oppoſes.

If you ſay, That his hereſy does not conſiſt in exploding the merit of works in point of ſalvation, but in uſing that legal expreſſion, ſalvation by works, as a condition. I anſwer, that as I would not contend for the word Trinity, becauſe it is not in the Bible, no nor yet for the word Perfection, though it is there; neither would I contend for the expreſſion, ſalvation by works,

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as a condition; But the thing Mr. W. means by it, is there [in the Bible] in a hundred different turns and modes of expreſſion. Therefore it is highly worth contending for: and ſo much the more, as it is, next to the doctrine of the atonement, the moſt important part of the faith once delivered unto the Saints.

Any candid perſon acquainted with Mr. W's principles, (and for ſuch only the Minutes were written) cannot but ſee that he meant abſolutely nothing, but what our Saviour means in theſe and the like Scriptures, namely, that ſalvation is ſuſpended on a variety of things which Divines call by various names, and which Mr. W. with a majority of them, chuſes to call Conditions. "Except ye repent ye ſhall all periſh.—Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Here, repentance and converſion, are conditions of eternal ſalvation.—"If ye believe not, ye ſhall die in your ſins; for this is the Work of God [the work that God requires and approves] that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent."—Here, the work of faith is the condition.—"I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt. Bleſſed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." And here it is, doing God's commandments.

St. Paul, evangelical Paul, ſays the ſame thing in a variety of expreſſions. "If any man love not the Lord Jeſus, let him be anathema." If love the nobleſt work of the heart, does not take place, the fearful curſe will.—"If ye live after the fleſh ye ſhall die, but if ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the fleſh, ye ſhall live." Spiritual mortification is here the condition.—"Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord." Here holineſs is the condition.—"Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor thieves, nor revilers, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God." Ceaſing from fornication, drunkenneſs, &c. is the ſame condition.

St. John is in the ſame condemnation as Mr. W. for he declares, "There ſhall in no wiſe enter into the

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new Jeruſalem any thing that defileth, neither whatſoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." Here the condition is, not working abomination, &c. "Whoſoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life." Here the condition is ceaſing from hatred, the murder of the heart.

St. Peter is equally deep in the hereſy. In a variety of expreſſions he deſcribes the miſery and fatal latter end of thoſe "who eſcape the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord Jeſus, and are again intangled therein," through the non-performance of this condition, "If ye do theſe things, ye ſhall never fall."

As for St. James, I need not quote him: you know, that when Luther was in his heat, he could have found it in his heart to tear this precious epiſtle from among the ſacred books, and burn it as an epiſtle of ſtraw. He thought the author of it was an enemy to free grace, an abettor of Popiſh tenets, an antichriſt. It is true, the ſcales of prejudice fell at laſt from his eyes, but alas! it was not till he had ſeen the Antinomian boar lay waſte the Lord's flouriſhing vineyard all over proteſtant Germany: then was he glad to draw againſt him St. James's deſpiſed ſword; and I ſhall be happily miſtaken, Sir, if you are not obliged one day to make uſe of the heretical Minutes, as he did of the epiſtle of ſtraw.

If any ſtill urge, "I do not love the word condition." I reply; it is no wonder; ſince thouſands ſo hate the thing, that they even chuſe to go to hell, rather than perform it. But let an old worthy divine, approved by all but Criſp's diſciples, tell you what we mean by condition: "an antecedent condition, (ſays Mr. Flavel in his diſcourſe of errors) ſignifies no more than an act of ours; which, though it be neither perfect in any degree, nor in the leaſt meritorious of the benefit conferred, nor performed in our own natural ſtrength; is yet, according to the conſtitution of the covenant, required of us, in order to the bleſſings conſequent thereupon, by virtue of the promiſe: and conſequently, benefits and mercies granted in this order, are and muſt be ſuſpended by the donor, till it be performed." Such a condition

dition we affirm faith to be, with all that faith neceſſarily implies.

When Dr. Criſp, in the laſt century, repreſented all the ſober Puritan Divines as legal, they anſwered, "The covenant though conditional, is a diſpenſation of grace. There is grace in giving ability to perform the condition, as well as beſtowing the benefits: God's enjoining the one in order to the other, makes not the benefit to be leſs of grace; but it is a diſplay of God's wiſdom, in conferring the benefit ſuitably to the nature and condition of men in this life, who are here in a ſtate of trial; yea, the conditions are but a meetneſs to receive the bleſſings."

"The reaſon, added they, why we uſe the word condition, is becauſe it beſt ſuits with man's relation to God, in his preſent dealings with us, as his ſubjects on trial for eternity. Chriſt as a prieſt has merited all: but as a prieſtly king he diſpenſeth all: he enjoins the conditions in order to the benefits, and makes the benefits motives to our compliance with the conditions. He treats with men as his ſubjects, whom he will now rule, and hereafter judge. Now what word is ſo proper to expreſs the duties as enjoined means of benefits, as the word conditions? The word conditions is of the ſame nature as terms of the Goſpel. There are few authors of note, even of any perſuaſion that ſcruple uſing this word in our ſenſe, as Ames, Twiſs, Rutherford, Hooker, Norton, Preſton, Owen, ſynod of New-England, the aſſembly of Divines, &c. And none have reaſon to ſcruple it except ſuch as think we are juſtified before we are born." See Goſpel Truth vindicated, by Williams, againſt Dr. Criſp.

If all the Proteſtant Divines who have directly or indirectly repreſented repentance and faith as conditions of preſent ſalvation; and holineſs of heart and life as conditions of eternal glory, as things *ſine quibus non*, without which ſalvation and glory neither can nor will follow:—if all thoſe Divines, I ſay, are guilty of hereſy, ninety-nine out of an hundred are heretics, and none of them, deeper in the hereſy than yourſelf.

In your Sermons, page 39, clearing yourself of the slander that you do not preach up, recommend and insist on the necessity of good works; you add, "I not only preach this or that part of the moral law, but I preach the whole moral law; and I tell you plainly, that if you do not perform the whole will of God, you cannot be finally saved." Then you add, "Surely they who contend for the doctrine of works will be satisfied with this, or they are very unreasonable." Indeed, Sir, Mr. W. is quite satisfied with it; I only wonder what in the world can make you so dissatisfied with his Minutes; for he never gave Antinomianism a more legal thrust.

And as you make works so absolutely necessary to eternal salvation, so do you make a law-work an universal prerequisite of present salvation. Speaking of the fear and dread that seize a sinner under convictions of sin, you say, page 111. "This inward shock of perturbation must pass upon the soul of every returning sinner more or less, before he can possibly be rendered a proper object of divine grace and mercy." Hold, Sir, you go one step beyond Mr. W. for he steadily maintains, that if the sinner was not a proper object of divine grace, before he feels the inward shock you speak of, he would never be shocked and return.

Do not all unprejudiced persons see, that what Mr. W. calls condition, others call way, means, or terms? &c. And that you have as little reason to pick a quarrel with him, as to raise a body of men against a quiet traveller, for calling a certa n sum, a guinea, whereas you think it more proper to call it one pound one,—twenty-one shillings,—forty-two six-pences,—or sixty-three groats. Oh, Sir, what reason have we to be ashamed of our chicaneries; and to beseech the Lord, that they may not stumble the weak, and harden infidels!

O how justly does Mr. W. ask next?

V. "*What have we then been disputing about for these thirty years? I am afraid about words.*"

Pardon

Pardon me, Sir, if here alſo I cannot, with you, cry hereſy! Far from doing it, I admire the candour of an old man of God, who inſtead of ſtiffly holding, and obſtinately maintaining an old miſtake, comes down as a little child, and freely acknowledges it before a reſpectable body of Preachers, whoſe eſteem it is his intereſt to ſecure. O how many are there that look upon Mr. W. as a rotten threſhold, and themſelves as pillars in the temple of God, who would not own themſelves miſtaken for the world!

He ſays, "*I am afraid we have diſputed about words*;" perhaps he might have ſaid, I am very ſure of it. How many diſputes have been raiſed theſe thirty years among religious people, about thoſe works of the heart, which St. Paul calls Repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? Some have called them the only way or method of receiving ſalvation, others the means of ſalvation, others the terms of it. Some have named them duties or graces neceſſary to ſalvation, others conditions of ſalvation, others parts of ſalvation, or privileges annexed to it; while others have gone far round about, and uſed I know not what far fetched expreſſions, and ambiguous phraſes to convey the ſame idea. I ſay the ſame idea, for if all maintain that although repentance and works meet for it, and faith working by love, are not meritorious, they are nevertheleſs abſolutely neceſſary, that they are a thing, *ſine qua non*, all are agreed; and that if they diſpute, it muſt be, as Mr. W. juſtly intimates, about words.

A compariſon will at once make you ſenſible of it. A Phyſician tells me, that the way, the only way or method in which we live, is abſtaining from poiſon, and taking proper food: no, ſays another, you ſhould ſay, that abſtaining from poiſon, and taking proper food, are the means, by which our life is preſerved. You are quite miſtaken, ſays a third, rejecting poiſon and eating are the terms God hath fixed upon for our preſervation; no, ſays a fourth, they are duties, without the performance, or bleſſings, without the receiving of which we muſt abſolutely die: I believe for my part ſays another, that Providence hath engaged to pre-

ſerve our life, on condition that we ſhall forbear taking poiſon, and eat proper food. You are all in the wrong, you know nothing at all of the matter; (ſays another who applauds himſelf much for his wonderful diſcovery) turning from poiſon, and receiving nouriſhment, are the exerciſes of a living man, therefore they muſt abſolutely be called parts of his life, or privileges annexed to it; you quite take away people's appetite, and clog their ſtomach, by calling them duties, terms, conditions; only call them privileges and you'll ſee no-body will touch poiſon, and all will eat moſt heartily.—While they are all neglecting their food, and taking the poiſon of this contention, he that had mentioned the word condition, ſtarts up and ſays, "*Review the whole affair; take heed to your aſſertions; I am afraid we diſpute about words.*" Upon this all riſe againſt him, all accuſe him of robbing the Preſerver of men of his glory, or holding a tenet injurious to the very fundamental principles of our conſtitution.

Let us leave them to the uneaſy workings of their unaccountable panic, to conſider the next article of the Minutes.

VI. "*As to merit itſelf, of which we have been ſo dreadfully afraid: we are rewarded according to our works, yea, becauſe of our works. How does this differ from, for the ſake of our works? And how differs this from ſecundum merita operum? As our works deſerve? Can you ſplit this hair? I doubt, I cannot.*"

If Mr. W. meant, that we are ſaved by the merit of works, and not entirely by that of Chriſt, you might exclaim againſt his propoſition as erroneous; and I would echo back your exclamation. But as he flatly denies it No. 4. in thoſe words, Not by the merit of works, and has conſtantly aſſerted the contrary for above thirty years, we cannot without monſtrous injuſtice, fix that ſenſe upon the word merit in this paragraph.

Diveſting himſelf of bigotry and party-ſpirit, he generouſly acknowledges truth even when it is held forth by his adverſaries. An inſtance of candour wor-

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thy of our imitation! He ſees that God offers and gives his children here on earth, particular rewards for particular inſtances of obedience. He knows that when a man is ſaved meritoriouſly by Chriſt, and continually by (or if you pleaſe, upon the terms of) the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love, he ſhall particularly be rewarded in heaven for his works: And he obſerves, that the Scriptures ſteadily maintain, we are recompenſed according to our works, yea, becauſe of our works.

The former of theſe aſſertions is plain from the parable of the talents, and from theſe words of our Lord, Matt. xvi. 27. "The Son of man ſhall come in the glory of his Father, and reward every man according to his work;"—Unbelievers according to the various degrees of demerit belonging to their evil works, (for ſome of them ſhall comparatively be beaten with few ſtripes;) and believers according to the various degrees of excellence found in their good works; for as "one ſtar differeth from another ſtar in glory, ſo alſo is the reſurrection of the righteous dead."

The latter aſſertion is not leſs evident from the repeated declarations of God: "Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I alſo will keep thee from the hour of temptation which ſhall come upon all the world." Rev. iii. 10.—"Becauſe Phineas was zealous for his God, [in killing Zimri and Coſbi,] behold I give unto him my covenant of peace, and he ſhall have it, and his ſeed after him, even the covenant of an everlaſting prieſthood."—And again, "Becauſe thou haſt done this, and haſt not with-held thy ſon, by myſelf have I ſworn that in bleſſing I will bleſs thee, becauſe thou haſt obeyed my voice." Now, ſays Mr. W. how differs this from, I will bleſs thee for the ſake of thy obedience to my voice? And how differs this from *ſecundum merita obedientiæ?* As thy obedience deſerves? And by comparing the difference of theſe expreſſions to the ſplitting of a hair, or to a metaphyſical ſubtilty, he very juſtly inſinuates, that we have been too dreadfully afraid of the word merit. Surely, Sir, you will not diveſt yourſelf of the candor that belongs

to a Chriſtian, to put on the bitter zeal of a bigot. You will not run for fear of Popery into the very Spirit of it, by crying Hereſy! Hereſy! before you have maturely conſidered the queſtion: Or if you have done ſo once, you will do it no more. And if Mr. W. ſhould ever propoſe again the ſplitting of a hair, I hope, you will remember that equity (to ſay nothing of Brotherly love) requires you to ſplit the hair firſt yourſelf, before you can with decency ſtir up people far and near againſt him, for modeſtly doubting, whether he can do it or no?

But ſuppoſe ſome are determined to cry Hereſy! whenever they ſee the word *merit*; I hope others will candidly weigh what follows, in the balance of unprejudiced Reaſon.

If we detach from the word *Merit* the idea of "Obligation on God's part to beſtow any thing upon creatures, who have a thouſand times forfeited their comforts and exiſtence;" If we take it in the ſenſe we fix to it in an hundred caſes; for inſtance this: "A maſter may reward his ſcholars according to the *merit* of their exerciſes, or he may not; for *merit* of the beſt exerciſe can never bind him to beſtow a premium for it, unleſs he has promiſed it of his own accord:" if we take, I ſay, the word *merit* in this ſimple ſenſe, it may be joined to the word *good works*, and bear an evangelical meaning.

To be convinced of it, candid Reader, conſider, with Mr. W. that "God accepts and rewards no work but ſo far as it proceeds from his own grace through the Beloved." Forget not that Chriſt's Spirit is the ſavour of each believer's ſalt, and that he puts excellence into the *good* works of his people, or elſe they could not be *good*. Remember, he is as much concerned in the good tempers, words, and actions of his living members, as a tree is concerned in the ſap, leaves, and fruit of the branches it bears, John xv. 5. Conſider, I ſay, all this, and tell us, whether it can reflect diſhonor upon Chriſt and his grace, to affirm, that as his perſonal merit,—the merit of his holy life and painful death, opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers,

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ſo the merit of thoſe works which he enables his members to do, will determine the peculiar degrees of glory graciouſly allotted to each of them.

I own, I believe there is ſuch a dignity in every thing in which the Son of God has an hand, that the Father, who is always well pleaſed with him and his works, cannot but look upon it with peculiar complacence. Even a cup of water given in his dear name, that is, by the efficacy of his loving Spirit, hath that in it which ſhall in no wiſe loſe its reward; for it has ſomething of the love of the God-man Jeſus, which merits all the approbation and ſmiles of the Father.

In our well-meant zeal againſt Popery we have been driven to an extreme, and have not done good works juſtice. "I am the Vine, ſays Jeſus, and ye are the branches, he that abideth in me bringeth forth much fruit: Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." What! is the Father glorified in the fruit of believers; and ſhall this fruit be repreſented to us always grub-eaten, and rotten at the core? Do we honor either the Vine, or the Huſbandman, while one hour we ſpeak wonders of the fruit of the Vine, and the next repreſent the branches and their fruit as full of deadly poiſon? O God of mercy and patience, forgive us, for we know not what we do! we even think we do thee ſervice: O give us genuine, and ſave from *voluntary humility*.

Believer, let not the virtue of thy Saviour's righteouſneſs, the only good thing that is in thee, be evil ſpoken of. "Thou art grafted upon the good olive-tree; be not high-minded but fear;" fear to be cut off like the branch that beareth not fruit; but be not afraid to ſuck the balmy ſap, till the peaceful olive ripens in thy ſoul, and drops the oil of joy that makes a chearful countenance. Thou art "married to Chriſt, that henceforth thou ſhouldſt bring forth fruit unto God." O let not thy miſtaken brethren diſcourage thee from doing all the good that thy heart and hand find to do, and that with all thy might.

I write theſe alluſions as they occur to my mind, to raiſe thy thoughts above ſpiritual ſloth and barrenneſs

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of heart, by ſhowing thee, through a Scriptural glaſs, ſomething of thy huſband's glory, and of the excellence of the labour of love, wherein thou haſt the honour of being worker together with him. Let not what I ſay puff thee up, but encourage thee to "be ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as thou knoweſt thy labour is not in vain in the Lord." Remember thou haſt nothing to boaſt of, but much reaſon to be humbled. If thy works are compared to a roſe, the colour, odour, and ſweetneſs are Chriſt's; the aptneſs to fade, and the thorns are thine. If to a burning taper, the ſnuff and ſmoke come from thee, the bright and chearing light from thy Bridegroom. The excellence and merit of the performance flow from him: the flaws and imperfections from thee; nevertheleſs the whole work is as truly thine, as grapes are truly the fruit of the branch that bore them. And yet, "as the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the vine, no more canſt thou, except thou abide in Chriſt: for without him thou canſt do nothing."

Having thus cautioned thee againſt the Popiſh abuſe of Mr. W's doctrine of the excellence of works, and ſhewn thee the evangelical uſe that a real Proteſtant ſhould make of it; I return to the word merit, of which we have been ſo dreadfully afraid. Let a compariſon help thee to underſtand, how a believer may uſe it in a very harmleſs ſenſe.

The king promiſes rewards for good pictures, to miſerable foundlings, whom he has charitably brought up, and graciouſly admitted into his royal academy of painting: far from being maſters of their art, they can of themſelves do nothing but ſpoil canvas, and waſte colours by making monſtrous figures: but the king's ſon, a perfect painter, by his father's leave guides their hands, and by that mean good pictures are produced, though not ſo excellent as they would have been, had not he made them by their ſtiff and clumſy hands. The king however approves of them, and fixes the reward of each picture according to its peculiar *merit*. If thou ſayeſt that the poor foundlings, owing all to his

his majesty, and the prince's having freely guided their hands, they themselves *merit* nothing; because after all they have done, they are miserable dawbers still, and nothing is properly theirs but the imperfections of the pictures, and therefore the king's reward, though it may be of promise, can never be of debt; I grant, I assert it. But if thou sayest the good pictures have no *merit*, I beg leave to dissent from thee, and tell thee thou speakest as unadvisedly for the king, as Job's friends did for God. For if the pictures have absolutely no *merit*, dost not thou greatly reflect upon the king's taste and wisdom in saying that he *rewards* them? In the name of common sense, what is it he rewards? The *merit* or *demerit* of the work?

But this is not all, if the pictures have no *merit*, what hath the king's son been doing? Hath he lost all his trouble in helping the novices to sketch and finish them? Shall we deny the excellence of *his* performance, because *they* were concerned in it? Shall we be guilty of this glaring partiality any longer? No, some Protestants will dare to judge righteous judgment, and acknowledging there is *merit* where Christ *puts* it, and where God *rewards* it, they will give *honor to whom honor is due*, even to him *that worketh all* the good *in all* his creatures.

For my part I intirely agree with the Author of the Minutes, and thank him for daring to break the ice of prejudice and bigotry among us, by restoring *works of righteousness* to their deserved glory, without detracting from the glory of *the Lord our righteousness*. I am as much persuaded that the Grace of Christ *merits* in the works of his members, though it is mixed with dust and dross, which are good for nothing. As there is but *one Mediator*, one prevailing Intercessor *between God and us*, even *the man Christ Jesus*; and nevertheless his Spirit in us, *maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered*: so there is but one man whose works are truly meritorious; but when He works in us by his Spirit, our works cannot (so far as he is concerned in them) but be in a sense meritorious; because they are,—his works. Real Protestant,

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if thou denieſt this, thou maintaineſt an antichriſtian propoſition, namely, that Chriſt has loſt his power of *meriting*. Herein I muſt diſſent from thee, nor will the cry Hereſy! Popery! make me give up this fundamental Truth of Chriſtianity, that Jeſus is the ſame, the very ſame deſerving Lord, yeſterday, to-day and for ever.

In this evangelical view of things, the Redeemer is much exalted by the doctrine of the *merit* of good works; and believers are ſtill left in their native duſt to cry out, "Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy name give we the praiſe." In the light of this precious truth we ſee and admire, the indearing conteſt that is always carried on, between God's loving-kindneſs, and the humble gratitude of believers. God ſays, "Well done good and faithful ſervants, reap what ye have ſown:" and they anſwer, Lord, Thy pound *hath gained all*; *thou haſt wrought all our works in us*. God ſays, "They ſhall walk with me in white; for they are worthy:" and they reply, "Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, and hath waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood." Chriſt crowns faith by this gracious declaration, "Thy faith hath ſaved thee:" and believers in their turn, crown Chriſt by this true confeſſion, "Not by works of righteouſneſs that we have done, but according to thy mercy thou haſt ſaved us; for thou haſt quickened us by thy Spirit when we were dead in ſin; yea, thou didſt redeem us unto God by thy blood, hundreds of years before we had done any one good work. In a word, they juſtly give God all the glory of their ſalvation, agreeable to the firſt axiom in the Goſpel-plan, and God graciouſly gives them all the reward, according to the ſecond.

And now, is it not pity that any good men ſhould be ſo far biaſſed by the prejudices of their education, or influenced by the ſpirit of their party, as to account this delightful harmonizing view of evangelical truths, a dreadful Hereſy? Is it not pity that by ſo doing they ſhould expoſe their prepoſſeſſion, ſtrengthen the hands of Antinomians, harden the hearts of Papiſts, deprive their Saviour of part of the honor due to him,

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leave *seeming* contradictions in the Scriptures unexplained, and trample under foot, as unworthy of their Protestant-orthodoxy, a powerful motive to obedience, by which neither Moses nor Jesus were above being influenced; for the one looked to the recompence of reward, and the other for the joy that was set before him, both despised the shame, and endured the cross.

It may not be amiss to illustrate what has been advanced upon the merit or rewardableness of works, by Scriptural instances of old and modern Saints who have pleaded it before God. David speaks thus in the 18th Psalm, "The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me:—I was upright before him, therefore hath he recompensed me according to my righteousness," &c. And in the 119th Psalm, having mentioned his spiritual comforts he says, "This I had because, I kept thy precepts." Another instance no less remarkable, is that of Hezekiah, who prayed thus in his sickness, "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight."

We see instances of this boldness in the New Testament also. We have left all to follow thee, said once the Disciples to our Lord, and what shall we have for this sacrifice? Jesus instead of blaming their question, simply told them they should have an hundred fold for all they had left, and made it a standing rule of distribution for all the church. St. John exhorts the elect lady, to "look to herself that she lose not the things that she hath wrought, but receive a full reward." And evangelical Paul desires the Hebrews "not to cast away their confidence, which hath great recompence of reward;" and charges the Colossians to "see that none beguile them of their reward, in a voluntary humility."

From these and the like Scriptures, I conclude, that those who have a clear witness they have done what God commanded, may, without heresy, humbly demand the promised reward: which they can never do

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without this idea, that according to the tenor of the Gospel-covenant, they are fit subjects for it.

I know some will take the alarm, and to save the ark which they think totters by this doctrine, will affirm, that in the above-mentioned passages David personates Christ: and Hezekiah the Pharisee. But this is contradicting the whole context, to say nothing of all sober commentators. Mr. Henry tells us, that David, in these verses, "reflects with comfort upon his own integrity, and rejoiceth, like St. Paul, in the testimony of his own conscience, that he had had his conversation in godly sincerity." And he informs us, that the Psalmist lays down in this psalm "the rules of God's government, that we may know not only what God expects from us, but what we may expect from him." With regard to Hezekiah, it is plain his prayer was heard; a strong proof that it was inspired by the Spirit of Jesus, and not that of the Pharisee.

But if you reject, Sir, the testimony of David, and Hezekiah, because they were Jews, receive at least that of real Protestants: for which we only need go as far as Bath or Talgarth parish: there we shall find chapels where the Protestants have agreed together, to ask *rewards* as solemnly as ever David and Hezekiah did. In the hymns you have revised for another edition, and by that means made your own with respect to the doctrine, one is calculated to "Welcome a messenger of Jesu's grace," and all the congregation sings,

"Give *reward* of grace and glory
"To thy faithful labourer there."

What, Sir, do you allow the labours of a Minister to be of such dignity, and his faithfulness to have such uncommon merit, that a thousand people can boldly ask God a reward for him, and that not only of gifts and temporal blessings, but of grace; and not of grace only, but glory too! You have in those two lines the very quintessence of the three grand heresies of the Minutes, faithfulness, works and merit. Permit me to add one passage more, from page 312, of Baxter's *Methodus Theologiæ Christianæ*.

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"The word merit rightly explained is not amiss. All the fathers of the primitive church have made use of it without opposition, to the best of my remembrance.—It may be used by believers who do not make a cloke for error, by wise men who will not be offended at it, and by those who want to defend the truth, and convey clearer ideas in the explanation of things intricate. There is no word that fully conveys the same idea: that which comes nearest to it is dignity, and suspicious persons will not like it much better. We have three words in the New Testament that come very near it, αξιος, μισθος and δικαιον, and they occur pretty frequently there. We render them *worthy*, *reward* and *just*; and the abuse Papists make of them ought not to make us reject their use. The English word *worthy* conveys no other idea than that of the Latin word *meritum* taken actively: nor has the word *reward*, any other signification than the word *meritum*, taken passively; therefore they who can put a candid sense upon the words *worthy* and *reward*, should do the same with regard to the word *merit*."

Having explained and vindicated the sixth Article of the Minutes, I proceed to the

VII. "*The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions, is drawn from matter of fact. God does, in fact, justify those, who by their own confession, neither feared God nor wrought righteousness. Is this an exception to the rule?*

"*It is a doubt, if God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure, that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness? His own saying so is not proof: for we know, how all that are convinced of sin, undervalue themselves in every respect.*"

Do you think, Sir, the heresy of this proposition consists in intimating, that God does in fact justify those who fear him, and not those who make absolutely no stop in the downward road of open sin and flagrant iniquity? If it does, I am sure the sacred writers are heretics to a man. See the account we have of conversions in the Scripture; please to re-

member what Mr. W. means by juſtification, and then anſwer the following queſtions:

Did not the prodigal ſon come to himſelf, repent, and return to his father, before he received the kiſs of peace? Did not the woman that was a ſinner forſake her wicked courſe of life, before our Lord ſaid to her, Go in peace, thy ſins are forgiven thee?

Again, was not the woman of Samaria convinced of ſin, yea of all that ever ſhe did, before our Lord revealed himſelf to her, to enable her to believe unto juſtification? Did not Zaccheus evidence his fear of God, yea and work righteouſneſs by hearty offers of reſtitution, before Chriſt teſtified that he was a ſon of Abraham? Did not St. Paul expreſs his fear of God, and readineſs to work righteouſneſs, when he cried out, Lord what wouldſt thou have me to do? Yea did he not produce fruits meet for repentance, by praying three days and three nights, before Ananias was ſent to direct him how to waſh away his ſins? Did not the Eunuch and Cornelius fear God? Did not David himſelf, whom the apoſtle mentions as a grand inſtance of juſtification without the merit of works, fear God from his youth? And when he had wrought folly in Iſrael, was he not humbled for his ſin, before he was waſhed from it? Did he not confeſs his crime and ſay, I have ſinned; before Nathan ſaid, The Lord hath put away thy ſin?

Does not St. Paul himſelf carry Mr. W's hereſy ſo far as to ſay? "Whoſoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this ſalvation ſent?" Acts xiii. 26. Muſt we ſo underſtand Rom. iv. 5. as to make him contradict point blank his own declarations, his own experience, and the account of all the abovementioned converſions? Certainly not. Thoſe words "God juſtifies the ungodly, and him that worketh not, but believeth in Jeſus," when candidly explained, agree perfectly with Mr. W's doctrine. 1. By the ungodly, the Apoſtle does not mean the wicked that does not forſake his way: but the man, who before he believed to juſtification, was ungodly, and ſtill remains ungodly in the eye of the law of works, needing

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daily forgiveneſs by grace, even after he is made godly in a goſpel ſenſe. 2. By him that worketh not, St. Paul does not mean a lazy indolent wretch, who without any reluctance follows the ſtream of his corrupt nature; but a penitent, who, whatever works he does, has no dependance upon them, eſteems them as nothing, yea, as dung and droſs in compariſon of the excellency of Chriſt: and in ſhort, one who does not work to merit or purchaſe his juſtification, but comes to receive that invaluable Bleſſing as a free gift. 3. That this is the meaning of the Apoſtle is evident from his adding, that he that worketh not, yet believeth. For if he took the word worketh not, in an abſolute ſenſe, he could never make it agree with believing, which is certainly a work, yea, a work of our nobleſt part; for "with the heart man believeth to righteouſneſs." Add to this, Sir, that juſtifying faith, as I obſerved before, never comes without her fore-runner, conviction, nor conviction of ſin without ſuitable tempers or inward works. "There is nothing, ſays Dr. Owen, that I will more firmly adhere to in this whole doctrine, than the neceſſity of convictions previous to true believing;—as alſo diſplacency, ſorrow, fear, a deſire of deliverance, with other neceſſary effects of true convictions." St. Paul therefore is conſiſtent with himſelf, and Mr. W. with St. Paul.

Again, if God juſtifies ſinners merely as ungodly, and people that work not, why ſhould he not juſtify all ſinners? For they are all ungodly, and there is none of them that does good, no not one? Why did not the Phariſee, for example, go to his houſe juſtified as well as the Publican? You will probably anſwer, that he was not convinced of ſin. Why, Sir, this is juſt what Mr. W. maintains: expreſs yourſelf in St. Peter's words, he did not fear God;—or in thoſe of John the Baptiſt, he did not bring forth fruit meet for repentance.

Should ſome aſk, what works meet for repentance did the woman caught in adultery do, before our Lord juſtified her? I would aſk in my turn; how do they know that the Lord juſtified her? Do they conclude

it from thoſe words, "Neither do I condemn thee?" Does not the context ſhow, that as the Phariſees had not condemned her to be ſtoned, according to the Moſaic law, neither would our Lord take upon himſelf to paſs ſentence upon her, according to his declaration on another occaſion, "I am not ſent to condemn the world, but that the world through me might be ſaved?" This by no means implies, that the world is juſtified in St. Paul's ſenſe, Rom. v. 1. But ſuppoſing ſhe was juſtified, how do you know that our Lord's words, writing, looks, and grace, had not brought her to godly ſhame and ſorrow, that is, to the fear of God, and the working of internal righteouſneſs, before he gave her the peace that paſſes all underſtanding?

After all, Mr. W. ſays, with modeſty and wiſdom, "*It is a doubt whether God makes any exception at all:*" and it lies upon you, to ſhow there is in theſe words any thing contrary to the humility of the true chriſtian, and orthodoxy of the ſound divine: but pleaſe to remember, that if you judge of orthodoxy according to the works of Dr. Criſp, we will take the liberty to appeal to the word of God.

But you make perhaps Mr. W's hereſy in this propoſition, conſiſt in his refuſing to take the word of perſons convinced of ſin, when they ſay they never feared God nor worked righteouſneſs. "For we know, ſays he, how all that are convinced of ſin, undervalue themſelves in every reſpect."

Had Mr. W. imagined, that ſome chriſtian friends, (O my God ſave me from ſuch friendſhip!) would leave no ſtone unturned to procure a copy of his Minutes, in order to find ſome occaſion againſt him, he would probably have worded this with more circumſpection. But he wrote for real friends; and he knew ſuch would at once enter into his meaning, which is, that "Perſons deeply convinced of ſin are apt, very apt, to form a wrong judgment both of their ſtate and performances, and to think the worſt of themſelves in every reſpect, that is, both with regard to what divine grace does in them, and by them."

And

And this is so obvious a truth, that he must be a novice indeed in Christian experience, who doubts of it for a moment; and a great lover of disputing, who will make a man an offender for so true an assertion. Do not we daily see, some, in whom the arrows of conviction stick fast, who think they are as much past recovery as Satan himself? Do not we hear others complain, "they grow worse and worse," when they only discover more and more how bad they are by nature? And are there not some, who bind upon themselves heavy burdens of their own making, and when they cannot bear them, are tormented in their conscience with imaginary guilt: while others are ready to go distracted through groundless fears of having committed the sin against the Holy Ghost? In a word, do we not see hundreds, who when they have reason to hope well of themselves, think there is no hope for them? In all these respects do they not act like Jonah in the fishes' belly, and say, "I am cast out of thy sight?" And have not they need to encourage themselves in their God, and say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?"

But let your conscience speak, Sir, on this matter. When some deep mourners have complained to you, of their misery, danger, and desperate state, did you never drop a word of comfort to this effect, "You undervalue yourselves; you write too bitter things against yourselves, your case is not so bad as your unbelieving fears represent it: God's thoughts are not as your thoughts: many like the foolish virgins think themselves sure of heaven, when they stand on the brink of hell; and many think they are just dropping into it, who are not far from the kingdom of God?"

Yea, and as it is with real seekers, so it is with real believers. Did not they undervalue, yea degrade themselves, by the remains of their unbelief; or which is the same, did they live up to their dignity, and every where consider themselves as "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven," what manner of persons, yea what angels would they be, in all holy conversation!

Sometimes their light shines with peculiar lustre like Moses' face, and they know it not. Thousands see their good works and glorify their Father who is in heaven, but the matter is hid from them; they complain, perhaps, that they are the most unprofitable of all his children. Let me instance in one particular; St. Paul, Mr. Whitfield, and thousands of the brightest stars of the church, have called themselves both the chief of sinners, and the least of all saints. Now, as in a chain there is but one link that can be called the first, or the last: so, in the very nature of things, there can be but one man in the immense file of Christ's soldiers, that is actually the chief of sinners, and the least of all saints: if a thousand believers therefore say those two appellations belong to themselves, it is evident that at least 999 undervalue themselves. For my part, I cannot but think they suit me ten thousand times better than they did St. Paul: I must therefore insolently think myself a less sinner and a greater saint than him; or of necessity believe that he, and all that are partakers of the same convincing grace, undervalue themselves in every respect.

One more article remains, and if it does not contain the *dreadful heresy*, which hitherto we have looked for in vain, the Minutes are from first to last Scripturally orthodox, and you have given Churchmen and Dissenters a false alarm.

VIII. "*Does not talking of a justified and sanctified state, tend to mislead men? Almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour, and every moment, pleasing or displeasing to God, according to our works? According to the whole of our inward tempers and outward behaviour.*"

To do this proposition justice, and prevent misunderstandings, I must premise some observations.

1. Mr. W. is not against persons talking of justification and sanctification in a Scriptural sense: for when he knows the tree by the fruits, he says himself to his flocks, as St. Paul did to the Corinthians, some of you

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are sanctified and justified. Nor does he deny that God justifies a penitent sinner in a moment, and that in a moment he can manifest himself unto his believing people as he does not to the world, and give them an inheritance among them that are sanctified, through faith in Jesus. His objection respects only the idea entertained by some, and countenanced by others, that when God forgives us our sins, he introduces us into a state where we are unalterably fixed in his blessed favour, and for ever stamped with his holy image: so that it matters no longer whether the tree is barren or not, whether it produces good or bad fruit; it was set at such a time, and therefore it must be a tree of righteousness still. A conclusion directly contrary to the words of our Lord and his beloved disciple: "By their fruit ye shall know them." Every branch in me that beareth not fruit [much more that beareth evil fruit] my Father taketh away."

2. Permit me, Sir, to observe also, that Mr. W. has many persons in his Societies (and would to God there were none in ours) who profess they were justified or sanctified in a moment; but instead of trusting in the living God, so trust to what was done in that moment, as to give over taking up their cross daily, and watching unto prayer with all perseverance. The consequences are deplorable; they slide back into the spirit of the world; and their tempers are no more regulated by the meek, gentle, humble love of Jesus. Some enquire with the Heathens, What shall we eat and what shall we drink to please ourselves? Others evidently love the world, lay up treasures on earth, or ask, Wherewith shall we be fashionably clothed? Therefore the love of the Father is not in them.—And not a few are led captive by the devil at his will: influenced by his unhappy suggestions, they harbour bitterness, malice, and revenge; none is in the right but themselves, and "wisdom shall die with them."

Now, Sir, Mr. W. cannot but fear, it is not well with persons who are in any of these cases: though every body should join to extol them as "dear children of God," he is persuaded that Satan has beguiled them

them as he did Eve, and he addreſſes them as our Lord did the angel of the church of Sardis, "I know thy works, that thou haſt a name that thou liveſt, and art dead, [or dying;] Repent therefore, and ſtrengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God." Mr. W. hath the word of prophecy, which he thinks more ſure than the opinion of a world of profeſſors; and according to that word he ſees, that "they who are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God," and that God's Spirit does not lead into the vanities of the world, or indulgence of fleſhly luſts, any more than into the pride or malice of Satan. Nor does he think that thoſe are not under the law, who can merrily laugh at the law, and paſs jeſts upon Moſes the venerable ſervant of God: but with St. Paul he aſſerts, that when people are under grace, and not under the law, ſin hath not dominion over them. With our Lord he declares, "He who committeth ſin is the ſervant of ſin," and with his Prophet, that "God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," with the leaſt degree of approbation. In ſhort, he believes that God being unchangeable in his holineſs, cannot but always love righteouſneſs and hate iniquity: and that as the heart is continually working either iniquity or righteouſneſs, and as God cannot but be pleaſed at the one, and diſpleaſed at the other, he is continually pleaſed or diſpleaſed with us, according to the workings of our heart, and the fruits which they outwardly produce.

Perhaps you object to the word *every moment*. But why ſhould you, Sir? If it is not *every moment*, it is *never*. If God does not approve holineſs and diſapprove ſin *every moment*, he never does it, for he changes not. If he does it only now and then, he is ſuch an one as ourſelves; for even wicked men will approve righteouſneſs and condemn unrighteouſneſs, by fits and ſtarts. I may *every moment* harbour malice in my heart, and ſo commit internal murder. If God winks at this one inſtant, why not two? And ſo on to days, months, and years? Does the *duration* of moral evil conſtitute ſin? May not I be guilty of the greateſt enor-

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mity in the twinkling of an eye? And is it not the ordinary property of the moſt horrid crimes, ſuch as robbery and adultery, that they are ſoon finiſhed.

Do not ſay, Sir, that this doctrine ſets aſide ſalvation by faith: It is highly conſiſtent with it. He that, in God's account, does the beſt works, hath the moſt faith, moſt of the ſap of eternal life that flows from the heavenly Vine: and he that has moſt faith, has moſt of Chriſt's likeneſs, and is of courſe moſt pleaſing to God, who cannot be pleaſed but with Chriſt and his living Image. On the other hand, he that in God's account does the worſt works, and has the worſt tempers, has moſt unbelief. He that has moſt unbelief, is moſt like his father the devil; and muſt conſequently be moſt diſpleaſing to him that accepts us in the Beloved, and not in the wicked one.

Having premiſed theſe obſervations, I come cloſer to the point, and aſſert, that if we are not every moment pleaſing or diſpleaſing to God, according to the works of our hearts and hands, you muſt ſet your ſeal to the following abſurdities:

1. *God is angry with the wicked all the day*, and yet there are *moments* in which he is not angry at them. 2. Lot *pleaſed* God as much in thoſe moments in which he got drunk and committed inceſt with his daughters, as in the day he exerciſed hoſpitality towards the diſguiſed angels. 3. David did not *diſpleaſe* God more when he committed adultery with Bath-ſheba, and imbrued his heart in her huſband's blood, than when he danced before the ark, or compoſed the 103d pſalm. 4. Solomon was as acceptable to God in the moment his wives turned away his heart after other gods, as when he choſe wiſdom, and his ſpeech pleaſed the Lord;—when he went after the goddeſs Aſhtoreth, and built an high place to bloody Molech; as when he repreſented our Melchiſedec, and dedicated the temple. 5. Again you muſt ſet your ſeal to theſe propoſitions of Dr. Criſp. "From the time thy tranſgreſſions were laid upon Chriſt, thou ceaſeſt to be a tranſgreſſor, to the laſt hour of thy life; ſo that now thou art not an idolater, thou art not a thief, &c. thou art not a ſinful perſon, whatſoever ſin

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thou committeſt."—Again, "God does no longer ſtand offended nor diſpleaſed, though a believer, after he is a believer, do ſin often: except he will be offended where there is no cauſe to be offended, which is blaſphemy to ſpeak." Yet again, "It is thought that eleſt perſons are in a damnable eſtate, in the time they walk in exceſs of riot; let me ſpeak freely to you, that the Lord has no more to lay to the charge of an eleſt perſon, yet in the height of iniquity, and in the exceſs of riot, and committing all the abominations that can be committed."—"There is no time but ſuch a perſon is a child of God." 6. In ſhort, Sir, you muſt be of the ſentiment of the wildeſt Antinomian I ever knew, who becauſe he had once a bright manifeſtation of pardon, not only concludes he is ſafe, though he lives in ſin, but aſſerts, God would no more be *diſpleaſed* with him for whoring and ſtealing, than for praying and receiving the ſacrament.

Again. It is an important truth, that we may pleaſe God for a time, and yet afterwards diſpleaſe him. St. Paul mentions thoſe who by putting away a good conſcience, concerning faith have made ſhipwreck, and therefore pleaſe God no longer, ſeeing that without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe him.

Of this the Iſraelites are a remarkable inſtance. "They did all drink of that ſpiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Chriſt. Yet with many of them God was not well pleaſed:" then comes the proof of the divine diſpleaſure; "for they were overthrown in the wilderneſs: Now, adds the Apoſtle, theſe things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition, that we ſhould not luſt after evil things, and tempt Chriſt, as they did." Therefore let him that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt, after their example, he fall into wilful ſin, the divine diſpleaſure, and utter deſtruction.

Our Lord teaches the ſame doctrine both by parables, and poſitive aſſertions. He gives us the hiſtory of a man to whom his Lord and King compaſſionately forgave a debt of ten thouſand talents: this ungrateful wretch by not forgiving his fellow-ſervant who owed

him

him an hundred pence, forfeited his own pardon, and drew upon himself the king's heaviest displeasure, "for he was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to him;" and to the eternal overthrow of Dr. Crisp's fashionable tenets, our Lord adds, "So likewise shall my Father do unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Agreeably to this he assured his disciples that his Father "pruneth every branch in him that beareth fruit, and taketh away every one that beareth not fruit;" and to shew how far this displeasure may proceed, he observes, that such a barren branch is cast forth, is withered, gathered, cast into the fire and burned.

Here, Sir, I might add all those Scriptures that testify the possibility of falling away from the divine favour: I might bring the alarming instances of those apostates, who once tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and afterwards fell from their stedfastness, lost their reward, became enemies to God by wicked works, hated the light which once they rejoiced in, because it reproved their evil deeds; trod under foot the Son of God, forgat they were washed from their old sins, and counted the blood of Christ, wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing. But I refer you, Sir, to the two John Goodwins of the age, the Rev. Mr. Wesley, and the Rev. Mr. Sellon, who have so cut down and stripped the *Crispian orthodoxy*, that some people think it actually lies without either root, bark, or branches, exposed to the view of those who have courage enough to see and think for themselves.

Should all they have advanced, to shew that we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, according to our internal and external works, have no weight with you; let me conclude by producing the testimony of two respectable divines, against whom you will not enter a protest.

The one is the Rector of Loughrea. You tell us, Sir, in your Sermons, page 88, that the acceptance of Cornelius "was not absolutely final and decisive;" and

you

you add, "So long as we continue in the flesh, we are doubtless in a probationary state. Even after Cornelius had been endued with the Holy Ghost, had he wilfully done despite to the Spirit of grace, he might have (not only displeased God which is all Mr. W. asserts in this proposition, but) fallen as deep into perdition as ever Judas did."

I knew one, Sir, who was burned as a dreadful heretic, that did not go farther in this heresy than you do. And that is good bish op Latimer; who not only affirmed, that "Christ shed as much blood for Judas as he did for Peter," but roundly asserted, "We may one time be in the book and another out, as it appeareth by David, who was written in the book of life; but when he sinned (which by the bye we may do every moment) he at the same time was out of the favour of God, until he had repented; out of Christ, who is the book in which all believers are written." Lat. Serm. on the 3d Sunday after Epiph.

Thus, Sir, have I looked out for the heresy, the dreadful heresy of Mr. W's Minutes, by bringing all the propositions they contain to the touch-stone of Scripture and common sense: but instead of finding it, I have found the very marrow of the Gospel of Christ, so far as it is opposed to Dr. Crisp's Antinomian Gospel; which at this time would overflow our little Sion, if God did not sit above the water floods, and say to the proudest billows of error, Hitherto shall ye come and no farther. I have shewed that the Minutes contain nothing but what is truly Scriptural, and nothing but what the best Calvinist divines have themselves directly or indirectly asserted; except perhaps the sixth proposition concerning the merit of works: and with respect to this. I hope I have demonstrated upon rational and evangelical principles, that Mr. W. far from bringing in a damnable heresy, hath done the Gospel justice, and protestantism service, by candidly giving up an old prejudice equally contrary to Scripture and good sense, a piece of bigotry which hath long hardened the Papists against the doctrine of salvation by the merit of Christ, and hath added inconceivable strength to the Antinomian

delusion

deluſion among us. One difficulty remains, and that is, to account for your attacking Mr. W. though you could not wound him without ſtabbing yourſelf. Reſerving my reflections upon this amazing ſtep for another letter, I remain, your aſtoniſhed ſervant in the bonds of a peaceful Goſpel. J. FLETCHER.

Fifth LETTER to the Rev. Mr. SHIRLEY.

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

HAVING vindicated both ſome important doctrines of the Goſpel, and an eminent ſervant of Chriſt from the charge of *dreadful hereſy*; I will now take the liberty of a friend to expoſtulate a little with *you*.

When Brutus among other Senators ruſhed upon Cæſar, the venerable General, as he wrapped himſelf in his mantle, juſt ſaid, "And art thou alſo among them? Even thou, my ſon?" May not Mr. W. addreſs you, Sir, in the ſame words, and add, "If a body of men muſt be raiſed to attack me, let ſome zealous follower of Dr. Criſp, ſome hot-headed vindicator of reprobation and eternal juſtification, blow the trumpet, and put himſelf at their head: but let it not be *you*, who believe with me that we are moral agents; that God is love; that Jeſus taſted death for every man; and that the Holy Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with ſinners. If you do not regard my reputation, conſider at leaſt your own; and expoſe me not as an heretic for advancing propoſitions, the ſubſtance of which you have avowed before the ſun."

But had thoſe propoſitions at length appeared to you unſound, yea, and had you never maintained them yourſelf, ſhould you not as a Chriſtian, and a brother, have wrote to him, acquainted him with your objections, and deſired him to ſolve them and explain himſelf, or you ſhould be obliged publicly to expoſe him?

Was this condeſcenſion, more than was due from you, Sir, and our other friends, to a grey-headed Miniſter of Chriſt, an old General in the armies of Emanuel,

a Father who has children capable of instructing even masters in Israel: and one whom God made the first and principal instrument of the late revival of internal religion in our church?

Instead of this friendly method, as if you was a Barak, commanded by the Lord God of Israel, you call together the children of Nephtali and Zebulon: you convene from England and Wales, Clergy and Laity, Churchmen and Dissenters, to meet you at Bristol, where they are, it seems, to be entertained in good and free quarters. And for what grand expedition. Why, on a day appointed, you are to march up in a body; not to attack Sisera and his iron chariots, but an old Caleb, who, without meddling with you, quietly goes on to the conquest of Canaan: not to desire in a friendly manner, after a fair debate of every proposition that appears dangerous, and upon previous conviction, that what is exceptionable may be given up; but to do what I think was never done by nominal, much less by *real Protestants*.—O let it not be told in Rome, lest the sons of the Inquisition rejoice!—This mixed, this formidable body is to insist upon Mr. W. and the Preachers in his connection, formally recanting their Minutes, as appearing injurious to the very fundamental principles of Christianity, and being dreadfully heretical. And this, astonishing! without the least inquiry made into their meaning and design;—without a shadow of authority from our superiors in church or state;—without an appeal to the law and to the testimony;—without form of process;—without judge or jury;—without so much as allowing the poor heretics, (who are condemned six weeks before they can possibly be heard) to answer for themselves!

As I was fortunate enough to stop some months ago such rash proceedings in Wales, permit me, Sir, to bear my testimony against them in England, and to tell you they exceed the late transactions in Edmund-Hall. The six students, against whom wrath was gone forth, were allowed to say what they could in their own defence, before they were sentenced, as unfit members of a literary society. Likewise the Vice-Chancellor had

the

the ſtatutes of the Univerſity of Oxford, ſeeming to countenance his proceedings: but what ſtatute of the Univerſity of Jeſus can you produce, even to ſave appearances? Surely not that which the Papiſts make ſuch uſe of, Compel them to come in; for I am perſuaded, that although Clergy and Laity, Churchmen and Diſſenters, are convened to go in a body to Mr. W's Conference, you mean no external compulſion. Much leſs are you authorized to inſiſt upon his owning himſelf a heretic, by theſe words of the Apoſtle, "As much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men, and eſteem Miniſters highly in love for their works ſake."—Neither by his command, An heretic after the firſt and ſecond admonition; for you have neither proved Mr. W. an heretic, nor once admoniſhed him as ſuch.

Surely our Lord will not ſmile upon your undertaking; for he has left his ſentiments upon record, the reverſe of your practice. He had ſaid, "Whoſoever ſhall receive (not provoke) one of ſuch children in my name, receiveth me. But John anſwered him ſaying, Maſter, we ſaw one caſting out devils in thy name, and we forbad him, becauſe he followeth not with us. Forbid him not, ſaid Jeſus, for there is no man who can do a miracle in my name, that can lightly ſpeak evil of me." Feſtus himſelf, though a poor heathen, will diſapprove of ſuch a ſtep. "It is not the manner of the Romans, ſays he, to deliver any man to die," (or to inſiſt on his publicly giving up his reputation, which in ſome caſes is worſe than death) "before that he who is accuſed, have the accuſers face to face, and have licence to anſwer for himſelf concerning the crime laid againſt him." The lordlineſs of your procedure, Sir, even exceed, in one reſpect, the ſeverity of the council of Conſtance; where poor Jerom of Prague had leave to plead his own cauſe, before he was obliged to acknowledge himſelf an heretic, and make a formal recantation of the propoſitions he had advanced.

Beſides, how could you ſuppoſe, Sir, that Mr. W. and the Preachers who ſhall aſſemble with him, are ſuch weak men, as tamely to acknowledge themſelves

heretics upon your *ipse dixit?* Suppose Mr. W. took it in his head to convene all the Divines that disapprove the extract of Zanchius, to go with him in a body to Mr. Toplady's chapel, and demand a formal recantation of that performance, as heretical; yea, to insist upon it, before they had "measured swords or broken a pike together;" would not the translator of Zanchius from the ramparts of Common Sense deservedly laugh at him, and ask whether he thought to frighten him by his protests, and bully him into orthodoxy?

O Sir, have we not fightings enough without, to employ all our time and strength? Must we also declare war and promote fightings within? Must we catch at every opportunity to stab one another, because the livery of truth which we wear is not turned up in the same manner? What can be more cruel than this? What can be more cutting to an old Minister of Christ, than to be traduced as a dreadful heretic, in printed letters sent to the best men in the land, yea, through all England and Scotland, and signed by a person of your rank and piety: To have things that he knows not, that he never meant, laid to his charge, and dispersed far and near? While he is gone to a neighbouring kingdom, to preach Jesus Christ, to have his friends prejudiced, his foes elevated, and the fruit of his extensive ministry at the point of being blasted? Put yourself in his place, Sir, and you will see that the wound is deep and reaches the very heart.

I can apologize for the other *real Protestants*. Some are utter strangers to polemic divinity; others are biassed by Calvinism; and one, whose name is used, never saw your circular letter till it was in print. But what can I say for you, Sir? Against hope I must believe in hope, that an unaccountable panic influenced your mind, and deprived you for a time of the calmness and candour which adorn your natural temper. If this is the case, may you act with less precipitancy for the future. And may the charity that hopeth all things, believeth all things, does not provoke, and is not provoked, rule in our hearts and lives. So shall the Heathen

then world drop their juſt objections againſt our unhappy diviſions, and once more be forced to cry out, See how theſe Chriſtians love! And ſo ſhall we give over trying to diſturb or pull down a part of the church of Chriſt, becauſe we diſlike the colour of the ſtones with which it is built; or becauſe our fellow-builders cannot pronounce Shibboleth juſt as we do.

One word more about Mr. W. and I have done. Of the two greateſt, and moſt uſeful Miniſters I ever knew, one is no more. The other, after amazing labours, flies ſtill with unwearied diligence through the three kingdoms, calling ſinners to repentance, and to the healing fountain of Jeſus' blood. Though oppreſſed with the weight of near ſeventy years, and the care of near thirty thouſand ſouls, he ſhames ſtill, by his unabated zeal and immenſe labours, all the young Miniſters in England, perhaps in Chriſtendom. He has generally blown the goſpel-trump, and rode twenty miles, before moſt of the profeſſors who deſpiſe his labours have left their downy pillow. As he begins the day, the week, the year, ſo he concludes them, ſtill intent upon extenſive ſervices for the glory of the Redeemer, and the good of ſouls. And ſhall we lightly lift up our pens, our tongues, our hands againſt him? No, let them rather forget their cunning. If we *will* quarrel, can we find no body to fall out with, but the Miniſter upon whom God puts the greateſt honour?

Our Elijah has lately been tranſlated to heaven. Grey-headed Eliſha is yet awhile continued upon earth. And ſhall we make a hurry and noiſe, to bring in railing accuſations againſt him with more ſucceſs? While we pretend to a peculiar zeal for Chriſt's glory, ſhall the very ſame ſpirit be found in us, which made his perſecutors ſay, He hath ſpoken blaſphemy, (or hereſy) what need we any farther witneſſes? Shall the ſons of the Prophets, ſhall even children in grace and knowledge, openly traduce the venerable ſeer and his abundant labours? When they ſee him run upon his Lord's errands, ſhall they cry, not,—Go up thou bald head, but, Go up thou heretic? O Jeſus of Nazareth, thou rejected of men, thou who waſt once called a deceiver

of

of the people, suffer it not; lest the ranging bear of persecution come suddenly out of the wood upon those sons of discord, and tear them in pieces!

And suppose a Noah, an old Preacher of righteousness, should have really nodded under the influence of an honest mistake, shall we act a worse part than that of Canaan? Shall we make sport of the nakedness which, we say, he has disclosed, when we have boldly uncovered it ourselves? O God, do not thou permit it, lest a curse of pride, self-sufficiency, bigotry, Antinomianism, and bitter zeal, come upon us; and lest the children begotten by our unkind preaching and unloving example, walk in our steps and inherit our propagated punishment!

Rather may the blessing of peace-makers be ours: may the meek, loving Spirit of Jesus, fill our hearts! May streams, not of the bitter waters which cause the curse, but of the living water which gladdens the city of God, flow from our Catholic breasts, and put out the fire of wild zeal and persecuting malice. May we know when Sion is really in danger; and when the accuser of the brethren gives a false alarm to disturb the peace of the church, and turn the stream of undefiled, lovely, and loving religion, into the miry channel of obstinate prejudice, imperious bigotry, and noisy, vain jangling. And may we at last unanimously worship together in the temple of peace, instead of striving for the mastery in the house of discord!

Should this public attempt to stop the war which has been publicly declared, be in any degree successful;—should it check a little the forwardness that has lately appeared to stir up contention, under pretence of opposing heresy;—should it make warm men willing to let the light of their moderation shine before others, and to keep a conscience void of offence towards their neighbours, instead of openly opposing their liberty of conscience;—should it cause the good that is in an eminent servant of Christ, to be less evil spoken of:—And above all, should it convince any of the great impropriety of exposing precious truths as dreadful heresies; and of preferring the Gospel of Dr. Crisp, to the

truth

truth as it is in Jesus:—I shall be less grieved at having been obliged to expostulate with you, Sir, in this public manner.

In hopes this will be the case, and with a heart full of ardent wishes that all our unhappy divisions may end in a greater union, I remain, Hon. and Rev. Sir, your obedient Servant, in the peaceable Gospel of Jesus Christ.

J. FLETCHER.

July 29, 1771.

F I N I S.

A SECOND CHECK TO ANTINOMIANISM.

A

SECOND CHECK

TO

ANTINOMIANISM;

OCCASIONED BY

A LATE NARRATIVE,

In THREE LETTERS,

To the Hon. and Rev. AUTHOR.

BY

The VINDICATOR of the Reverend Mr. WESLEY's Minutes.

"Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and scriptural doctrine; for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." 2 Tim. iv. 2, 3.

"Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; but let brotherly love continue."
Tit. i. 13. Heb. xiii. 1.

LONDON:

Printed and sold at the New-Chapel, City-Road; and at the Rev. Mr. WESLEY's Preaching-Houses in Town and Country.

[PRICE TEN-PENCE.]

PREFACE.

THE publication of the Vindication of Mr. Wesley's Minutes having been represented by some persons as an act of injustice, the following letter is published to throw some light upon that little event, and serve as a preface to the *Second Check to Antinomianism.*

To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

Rev. and dear Sir,

As I love open dealing, I send you the substance, and almost the very words of a private letter I have just written to Mr. Shirley, in answer to one, in which he informs me he is going to publish his Narrative. He is exceedingly welcome to make use of any part of my letters to Mr. I—d concerning the publication of my Vindication, and you are equally welcome to make what use you please of this. Among friends all things are, or should be common. I am,

Rev. and dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

Madeley, 11th Sept. 1771.

J. F.

To the Hon. and Rev. Mr Shirley.

Rev. and dear Sir,

It is extremely proper, nay, it is highly neceſſary, that the public ſhould be informed, how much like a miniſter of the Prince of Peace, and a meek, humble, loving brother in the goſpel of Chriſt you behaved at the conference. Had I been there, I would gladly have taken upon me to proclaim theſe tidings of joy to the lovers of Zion's peace. Your conduct at that time of love, is certainly the beſt excuſe for that haſty ſtep you had taken, as my deſire of ſtopping my Vindication upon hearing it, is the beſt apology I can make for my ſeverity to you.

I am not averſe at all, Sir, to your publiſhing the paſſages you mention out of my letters to Mr. I—d. They ſhew my peculiar love and reſpect for you, which I ſhall at all times think an honor, and at this juncture ſhall feel a peculiar pleaſure, to ſee proclaimed to the world. They apologize for my calling myſelf a *lover of quietneſs*, when I unfortunately prove *a ſon of contention:* And they demonſtrate that I am not altogether void of the fear, that becomes an aukward, unexperienced ſurgeon, when

when he ventures to open a vein in the arm of a perſon for whom he has the greateſt regard. How natural is it for him to tremble, leſt by miſſing the intended vein, and pricking an unſeen artery, he ſhould have done irreparable miſchief, inſtead of an uſeful operation.

But while you do me the kindneſs of publiſhing thoſe paſſages, permit me, Sir, to do Mr. W. the juſtice of informing him, I had alſo written to Mr. I—d, that, "whether my letters were ſuppreſſed or not, the Minutes *muſt* be vindicated,—that Mr. W. owed it to the Church, to the *real Proteſtants*, to all his ſocieties, and to his own aſperſed character,—and that after all, the controverſy did not ſeem to me, to be ſo much whether the Minutes ſhould ſtand, as whether the antinomian goſpel of Dr. Criſp ſhould prevail over the practical goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt."

I muſt alſo, Sir, beg leave to let my vindicated friend know, that in the very letter where I ſo earneſtly intreated Mr. I—d to ſtop the publication of my letters to you, and offered to take the whole expence of the impreſſion upon myſelf, though I ſhould be obliged to ſell my laſt ſhirt to defray it, I added that, "If they were publiſhed, I muſt look upon it as a *neceſſary evil* or *misfortune*," which of the two words I uſed I do not juſtly recollect:

A *miſ-*

A *misfortune* for you and me, who muſt appear inconſiſtent to the world: you, Sir, with your Sermons: and I with my Title-page; and nevertheleſs *neceſſary* to vindicate miſrepreſented truth, defend an eminent miniſter of Chriſt, and ſtem the torrent of Antinomianiſm.

It may not be improper alſo, to obſerve to you Sir, that when I preſented Mr. W. with my Vindication, I begged he would correct it, and take away whatever might be unkind or too ſharp: urging that though I meant no unkindneſs, I was not a proper judge of what I had written under peculiarly delicate and trying circumſtances, as well as in a great hurry; and did not therefore dare to truſt either my pen, my head, or my heart. He was no ſooner gone, than I ſent a letter after him, to repeat and urge the ſame requeſt and he wrote me word, he had "expunged every tart expreſſion." *If he has*, (for I have not yet ſeen what alterations his friendly pen has made,) I am reconciled to their publication: and *that he has*, I have reaſon to hope from the letters of two judicious London-friends, who calmed my fears, leſt I ſhould have treated you with unkindneſs.

One of them ſays, "I reverence Mr. Shirley for his candid acknowledgment of his haſtineſs in judging.'

judging. I commend the Calviniſts at the conference for their juſtice to Mr. W. and their acquieſcence in the declaration of the preachres in connection with him. But is that declaration however diſperſed a remedy adequate to the evil done not only to Mr. W. but to the cauſe and work of God? Several Calviniſts, in eagerneſs of malice, had diſperſed their calumnies through the three kingdoms. A truly excellent perſon herſelf, in her miſtaken zeal, had repreſented him as *a papiſt unmaſked*, an *heretick*, an *apoſtate*. A clergyman of the firſt reputation informs me, *a Poem on his apoſtacy* is juſt coming out. Letters have been ſent to every ſerious churchman and diſſenter through the Land together with the Goſpel Magazine. Great are the ſhoutings, *and now that he lieth, let him riſe up no more!* This is all the cry. His deareſt friends and children are ſtaggered and ſcarce know what to think. You, in your corner, cannot conceive the miſchief that has been done and is ſtill doing. But your letters, in the hand of Providence, may anſwer the good ends you propoſed by writing them. You have not been too ſevere to dear Mr. Shirley, moderate Calviniſts themſelves being judges; but very kind and friendly to ſet a good miſtaken man right, and probably to preſerve him from the like raſhneſs as long as he lives. Be not troubled therefore, but caſt your care upon the Lord."

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My other friend ſays, "Conſidering what harm the circular letter has done, and what an uſeleſs ſatisfaction Mr. Shirley has given by his vague acknowledgment, it is no more than juſt and equitable, that your letters ſhould be publiſhed."

Now, Sir, as I never ſaw that *Acknowledgment*, nor the *ſoftening corrections* made by Mr. W. in my Vindication; as I was not informed of ſome of the above-mentioned particulars when I was ſo eager to prevent the publication of my letters; and as I have reaſon to think that through the deſire of an immediate peace, the feſtering wound was rather ſkinned over than probed to the bottom; all I can ſay about this publication is, what I wrote to our common friend, namely, that "I muſt look upon it as a NECESSARY *evil*."

I am glad, Sir, you do not direct your letter to Mr. Olivers who was ſo buſy in publiſhing my Vindication, for by a letter I have juſt received from Briſtol, I am informed he did not hear how deſirous I was to call it in, till he had actually given out before a whole congregation, it would be ſold. Beſides, he would have pleaded with ſmartneſs, that he never approved of a patched up peace, that he bore his teſtimony againſt it, at the time it was made, and had a perſonal right to produce *my* arguments, ſince both parties refuſed to hear *his* at the conference.

If your letter is friendly, Sir, and you print it in the ſame ſize with my Vindication, I ſhall gladly by 10l. worth of the copies, and order them to be ſtitched with my Vindication, and given gratis to the purchaſers of it; as well to do you juſtice, as to convince the world that we make a loving war; and alſo to demonſtrate how much I regard your reſpectable character, and honor your dear perſon. Mr. W's heart is, I am perſuaded too full of brotherly love to deny me the pleaſure, of thus ſhewing you how ſincerely I am,

Rev. and dear Sir,

Your obedient ſervant,

Madeley, 11th Sept.
1771.

J. F.

FIRST LETTER.

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

I Cordially thank you for the greateſt part of your Narrative. It confirms me in my hopes, that your projected oppoſition to Mr. Weſley's minutes proceeded in general from zeal for the Redeemer's glory: and as ſuch a zeal, though amazingly miſtaken, had certainly ſomething very commendable in it. I ſincerely deſire your Narative may evidence your *good meaning*, as ſome think my Vindication does your *miſtake*.

In my laſt private letter I obſerved, Rev. Sir, that if your Narrative was *kind*, I would buy a number of copies and give them gratis to the purchaſers of my book, that they might ſee all you can poſſibly produce in your own defence, and do you all the juſtice your proper behaviour at the conference deſerves. But as it appears to me there are ſome important miſtakes in that performance, I neither dare recommend it *abſolutely* to my friends, nor wiſh it in the religious world the *full* ſucceſs you deſire.

I do not complain of its ſeverity; on the contrary, conſidering the ſharpneſs of my 5th letter, I gratefully acknowledge it is *kinder* than I had reaſon to expect. But permit me to tell you, Sir, I look for *juſtice* to the ſcriptural arguments I advance in defence of Truth, before I look for *kindneſs* to my inſignificant perſon, and could much ſooner be ſatisfied with the *former* than with the *latter* alone. As I do not admire the faſhionable method of ad-

vancing general charges without supporting them by particular proofs, I shall take the liberty of pointing out some mistakes in your Narrative, and by that means endeavour to do justice to Mr. Wesley's Declarations, your own Sermons, my Vindication, and above all to the cause of practical religion.

Waving the repetition of what I said in my last touching the publication of my five letters to you, I object first to your putting a wrong colour upon Mr. Wesley's declaration. You insinuate or assert that he, and 53 of the preachers in conference with him, give up the doctrine of justification by works in the day of judgment. *It appears*, say you, *from their subscribing the Declaration*, notwithstanding Mr. Oliver's remonstrances, *that they do not maintain a second justification by works.*

Surely, Sir, you wrong them. They might have objected to some of Mr. Oliver's expressions, or been displeased with his readiness to enter the lists of dispute; but certainly so many judicious and good men could never so betray the cause of practical religion, as tamely to renounce a truth of that importance. If they had, one step more would have carried them full into Dr. Crisp's eternal justification, which is the very center of Antinomianism; and without waiting for the return of the next conference, I would bear my *legal* testimony against their *antinomian* error. Mr. W. I reverence as the greatest minister I know, but would not follow him one step farther than he follows Christ. Were he really guilty of rejecting the evangelical doctrine of a second justification by works, with the plainness and honesty of a Suisse I would address him as I beg you would permit me to address you.

I. Neither you, Rev. Sir, nor any divine in the world have, I presume, a right to blot out of the sacred Records those words of Jesus Christ, St. James, and St. Paul: *Blessed are they that* DO *his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.*

life.—Not every one that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that DOES *the will of my Father—Be ye* therefore DOERS *of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves—for* as *we are under the law to Christ, not the hearers of the law shall be just before God, but the* DOERS *of the law shall be* JUSTIFIED.—*Every man's* WORK *shall be made manifest: For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's* WORK *of what sort it is.* His very *words* shall undergo the severest scrutiny: *I say unto you,* (O how many will insinuate the contrary!) *that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof* IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, *for* BY THY WORDS *shalt thou* then BE JUSTIFIED, *and by thy words shalt thou* then *be condemned.*

Can you say, Sir, that the justification mentioned by our Lord in this passage, is the same as that which St. Paul speaks of as the present privilege of all believers, and has no particular reference to *the day of judgment* mentioned in the preceding sentence? Or will you intimate our Lord does not declare we shall be justified in the last day by *works*, but by *words?* Would this evasion be judicious? Do not all professors know that *words* are *works* in a theological sense; as being both the signs of the *workings* of our hearts, and the positive *works* of our tongues? Will you expose your reputation as a divine, by trying to prove that although we shall be justified by the *works* of our *tongues*, those of our *hands* and *feet* shall never appear for or against our justification? Or will you insinuate that our Lord *recanted* the legal sermons written Matt. v. and xii? If you do, his particular account of the day of judgment, Chap. xxv. which strongly confirms and clearly explains the doctrine of our second justification by works, will prove you greatly mistaken as will also his declaration to St. John above 40 years after, *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man as his* WORK, not faith, *shall be.*

O if faith alone turns the ſcale of juſtifying evidence at the bar of God, how many bold antinomians will claim relation to Chriſt, and boaſt they are intereſted in his imputed righteouſneſs! How many will ſay with the fooliſh virgins, "*Lord! Lord!* WE *are of faith*, and *Abraham's children*: *In thy name* we publicly oppoſed all legal profeſſors, traduced their teachers as enemies to thy *free grace*; and *to do thee ſervice* made it our buſineſs to expoſe the righteouſneſs, and cry down the good works of thy people; therefore *Lord! Lord! open to us!*" But alas! far from thanking them for their pains, without looking at their boaſted faith, he will diſmiſs them with a *Depart from me ye that* WORK *iniquity!* As if he ſaid:

"*Depart*, ye that made the doctrine of my atonement a cloke for your ſins, or *ſewed* it as a *pillow under the arms of my people*, to make them ſleep in carnal ſecurity when they ſhould have *worked out their ſalvation with fear and trembling*. You *profeſs to know me*, but I diſown you. *My ſheep I know*: *Them that are mine I know*: The SEAL of my holineſs is upon them all: the motto of it (LET HIM THAT NAMETH THE NAME OF CHRIST DEPART FROM INIQUITY) is deeply engraven on their faithful breaſts—Not on yours, Ye *carnal*, Ye *ſold under Sin*."

"And *why called ye me Lord! Lord! and did not do the things which I ſaid?* Why did you even uſe my *righteouſneſs* as a *breaſt-plate*, to ſtand it out againſt *the word of my righteouſneſs*; and as an engine to break both tables of my law, and batter down my Holineſs? Your heart condemns you, Ye *ſinners in Zion!* Ye *ſalt without ſavour!* Ye believers without charity! And am not I *greater than your heart!* And *know I* not *your works?* Yes, *I know that the love of God is not in you*, for you deſpiſed one of theſe my brethren. How could you think to deceive me the *Searcher of hearts* and *Tryer of reins?* And how did you dare to *call yourſelves by my name?* As if you were *my* people? my *dear* people?

people? mine *elect?* Are not all my *peculiar people partakers of my holiness*, and *zealous of good works?* Have not I *chosen to myself the man that is godly?* And protested that *the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners* (though in sheep's clothing) *in the congregation of the righteous?* And *say I* not *to the wicked*, though he should have been one of my people, *Lo ammi* Thou art none of my people now, *what hast thou to do with taking my covenant in thy mouth?* You *denied me in works*, and did not *wash your hearts from iniquity* in my blood; therefore according to my word, I DENY YOU in my turn, *before my Father and his holy angels. Perish* your *hope*, Ye *hypocrites!* And utter darkness be your portion, *Ye double minded!* Let *fearfulness surprise* you, ye *tinkling cymbals!* Let the fall of your Babels crush you, Ye towering professors of my humble faith! Fly, ye *clouds without water*; *ye chaff*, fly before the blast of my righteous indignation! *Ye workers of iniquity!* Ye *Satans transformed into angels of light! Ye curfed! depart!*"

II. Nor is our Lord singular in his doctrine of justification or condemnation *by works* in the day of judgment. If it is an heresy, the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles are as great heretics as their Master. *Enoch*, quoted by St. Jude, *prophesied* that when *the Lord shall come to execute judgment upon all* men, *he will convince the ungodly among them of all their ungodly* DEEDS *and hard* SPEECHES. This *conviction* will no doubt be in order to condemnation: and this condemnation will not turn upon unbelief, but its effects, *ungodly deeds* and *hard speeches.*——Solomon confirms the joint testimony of Enoch and St. Jude where he says, *He that knoweth the heart shall render to every man according to his* WORKS: and again, *Know O young man, that for all these things*, for all thy WAYS, *God shall bring thee into judgment.*

St. Paul, the great champion for faith, is peculiarly express upon this anti-Crispian doctrine.

Th' Lord, says he, *in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, will render to every man according to his* DEEDS: *to them that* CONTINUE IN WELL DOING, here is the true perseverance of the saints! *Eternal life*:— *indignation upon every soul of man that* DOES *evil, and glory to every man who* WORKETH *good: for there is no respect of persons with God*— *We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things* DONE *in the body*, not according to that he hath *believed*, whether it be true or false, but *according to that he hath* DONE, *whether it be good or bad.*——St. Peter asserts that *the Father without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's* WORK.——And St. John, who next to our Lord gives us the most particular description of the day of judgment, concludes it by these awful words, *And the dead were judged out of things written in the books, according to their* WORKS. It is not once said *according to their* FAITH.

Permit me, Sir, to sum up all these testimonies in the words of two kings and two apostles. *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter*, says the King who chose Wisdom, *Fear God and keep his* COMMANDMENTS, *for this is the whole duty of man: for God shall bring every* WORK *into judgment, whether it be good or evil.*——*They that have* DONE *good*, says the King who is Wisdom itself (and the Athanasian creed after him) *shall go into everlasting life; and they that have* NOT DONE *good*, or *that have* DONE *evil, to everlasting punishment.*——*You see then*, and they are the words of St James, *that a man is* JUSTIFIED BY WORKS, *and not by faith only.* By faith he is justified at his conversion, and when his backslidings are healed. But he is *justified by works* (1.) In the hour of trial, as *Abraham* was *when he had offered up Isaac:* (2.) In a court of spiritual or civil judicature, as St. Paul at the bar of Festus. and (3.) before the judgment-seat of Christ, as every one will be whose *faith*, when he goes hence, is found *working by love:* For there, says St. Paul, as well as in consistorial courts, *circumcision*

cumcision is nothing, uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God, 1 Cor. vii. 19.

III. This doctrine is so obvious in the scripture, so generally received in all the churches of Christ, and so deeply engraven on the conscience of sincere professors, that the most eminent ministers of all denominations perpetually allude to it (Yourself, Sir, not accepted, as I could prove from your sermons, if you had not recanted them.) How often, for instance, has that great man of God the truly reverend Mr. Whitefield said to his immense congregations! "You are warned, I am clear of your blood, I shall rise as a swift witness against you, or you against me, in the terrible day of the Lord: O remember to clear me then;" or words to that purpose. And is not this just as if he had said, "We shall be *justified* or *condemned in the day of judgment* by what we are now *doing*: I by my preaching, and you by your hearing?"

And say not, Sir, that "such expressions were only *flights of oratory*, and prove nothing" If you do you *touch the apple of God's eye*. Mr. Whitefield was not a *flighty orator*, but spoke the words of soberness and truth, with divine pathos, and floods of tears declarative of his sincerity.

Instead of swelling this letter into a volumn (as I easily might) by producing quotations from all the sober puritan divines, who have directly or indirectly asserted a 2d. justification by works, I shall present you only with two passages from Mr. Henry. On Matt. xii. 37. he says, *Consider how strict the judgment will be on account of our words.* BY THY WORDS THOU SHALT BE JUSTIFIED *or* CONDEMNED, *a common rule in men's judgments, and here applied to God's. Note, the constant tenor of our discourse, according as it is gracious, or not gracious, will be an evidence for us, or against us at that day. Those that seemed to be religious, but bridled not their tongue, will then be found to have put a cheat upon themselves with a vain religion.*——*It concerns us to think much of*

of the day of judgment, that may be a check upon our tongues. And again,

Upon thoſe words, Rom. 2, 13. NOT THE HEARERS OF THE LAW ARE JUST BEFORE GOD, BUT THE DOERS OF THE LAW SHALL BE JUSTIFIED: the honeſt commentator ſays, *The jewiſh* (Antinomian) *Doctors bolſtered up their followers with an opinion that all that were Jews,* (the elect people of God) *how bad ſoever they lived, ſhould have a* glorious *place in the world to come. This the Apoſtle here oppoſes. It was a very great privilege that they had the law, but not a ſaving privilege,* UNLESS THEY LIVED UP TO THE LAW THEY HAD.——*We may apply it to the Goſpel: it is not hearing but* DOING THAT WILL SAVE US, John xiii 17. Jam. i 22. Who does not perceive that Mr. Henry ſaw the truth, and ſpoke it ſo far as he thought his calviniſt readers could bear it? Surely if that good man dareth to ſay *ſo much, we* who have done "leaning too much towards calviniſm," ſhould be inexcuſable if we did not ſay *all.*

IV. Theſe teſtimonies will, I hope, make you weigh with an additional degree of candor the following arguments, which I ſhall produce as a Logician, leſt any ſhould be tempted to call me a *bold Metaphyſician,* or *almoſt a Magician.*

The *voice* that St. John *heard in heaven* did not ſay, *Bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord, for their* faith *follows them:* no, it is THEIR WORKS. Faith is the hidden root, hope the riſing ſtalk, and love, together with good works, the nouriſhing corn: and as the King's agents who fill a royal granary, do not take in the roots and ſtalks, but the pure wheat alone: ſo Chriſt takes neither faith nor hope into heaven, the former being glorioufly abſorbed in ſight, and the latter in enjoyment.

If I may compare faith and hope to *the chariot of Iſrael and the* courſer *thereof,* they both bring believers to the everlaſting doors of glory, but do not enter in themſelves. Not ſo *Love* and *good Works,* for

for Love is both the nature and element of ſaints in glory; and good *Works* neceſſarily *follow them*, both in the *books* of remembrance which *ſhall* then *be opened*, and in the objects and witneſſes of thoſe works, who ſhall then be all preſent; as it appears from the words of our Lord, *You have done it, or you have not done it to one of the leaſt of* THESE *my brethren;* and thoſe of St. Paul to his dear converts, You ſhall be *my joy and my crown* in that day. Thus it is evident that although *faith* is the temporary meaſure according to which God deals out his mercy and grace in this world, as we may gather from that ſweet ſaying of our Lord, *Be it done according to thy* FAITH; yet *love* and *good works* are the eternal meaſures, according to which he diſtributes juſtification and glory in the world to come. On theſe obſervations I argue,

We ſhall be juſtified in the laſt day by the grace and evidences which ſhall *then* remain.

Love and good Works, the fruits of faith, ſhall *then* remain.

Therefore we ſhall *then* be juſtified by Love and good Works: that is, not by faith, but by its fruits.

V. This doctrine ſo agreeable to ſcripture, the ſentiment of moderate Calviniſts, and the dictates of reaſon, *recommends* itſelf likewiſe *to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.* Who, but Dr. Criſp, could (after a calm review of the whole affair) affirm that in the day of judgment, if I am accuſed of being actually an hypocrite, Chriſt's ſincerity will juſtify me, whether it be found in me or not?

Again, Suppoſe I am charged with being a drunkard, a thief, an whoremonger, a covetous perſon; or a fretful, impatient, ill-natured man, or if you pleaſe a proud bigot, an implacable zealot, a malicious perſecutor, who, notwithſtanding fair appearances of godlineſs, would raiſe diſturbances even in heaven if I were admitted there: will Chriſt's

ſobriety,

ſobriety, honeſty, chaſtity, generoſity: or will his gentleneſs, patience, and meekneſs, juſtify me from ſuch dreadful charges? muſt not I be found really ſober, honeſt, chaſte, and charitable? Muſt I not be inherently gentle, meek, and loving? Can we deny this without flying in the face of common ſenſe, breaking the ſtrongeſt bars of ſcriptural truth, and opening the flood-gates to the fouleſt waves of antinomianiſm? If we grant it, do we not grant a ſecond juſtification by works? And does not St. Paul grant, or rather *inſiſt* upon as much, when he declares that *Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord?*

VI. You will probably aſk what advantage the Church will reap from this doctrine of a ſecond juſtification by works. I anſwer that, under God, it will rouſe Antinomians out of their carnal ſecurity, ſtir up believers to follow hard after holineſs, and reconcile fatal differences among Chriſtians, and ſeeming contradictions in the ſcripture.

(1) It will re-awaken Antinomians †, who fancy there

* I beg I may not be underſtood to level the following paragraphs, or any part of theſe letters, at my pious *Calviniſt* brethren. God knows how deeply I reverence many, who are immovably fixed in what ſome call *the doctrines of grace*; how gladly (as conſcious of their genuine converſion and eminent uſefulneſs) I would lie in the duſt at their feet to honor our Lord in his dear members; and how often I have thought it a peculiar infelicity in any degree to diſſent from ſuch excellent men, with whom I wanted both to live and die, and with whom I hope ſoon to reign for ever.

As theſe *real* children of God lament the bad uſe antinomians make of their principles, I hope they will not be offended if I bear my teſtimony againſt a growing evil, which they have frequently oppoſed themſelves. While the *Calviniſts* guard the *Foundation* againſt *phariſees*, for which I return them my ſincere thanks; they will, I hope, allow the *Remonſtrants* to guard the *ſuperſtructure* againſt *antinomians*. If in doing thoſe good offices to the church, we find ourſelves obliged to bear a little hard upon the peculiar ſentiments of our oppoſite friends, let us do it in ſuch a manner as not to break the bonds of peace and brotherly

there is *no condemnation to them*, whether they *walk after the ſpirit in love*, or *after the fleſh* in malice: whether they *forſake all to follow Chriſt*, or like Judas and Sapphira *keep back part of* what ſhould be the Lord's without reſerve. Thouſands boldly profeſs juſtifying faith and perhaps eternal juſtification, who reverence the commandments of God, juſt as much as they regard the Scriptures quoted in Mr. W.'s minutes.

Upon their doctrinal ſyſtems they raiſe a tower of preſumption, whence they bid defiance both to the Law and Goſpel of Jeſus. His Law ſays, *Love God with all thy heart and thy neighbour as thyſelf, that thou mayeſt live* in glory.—*If thou wilt enter into* the *life* of glory, *keep the commandments.* But this raiſes their pity, inſtead of commanding their reſpect and exciting their diligence. "Moſes is buried, ſay they: We have nothing to do with the law! *We are* not *under the law to Chriſt!* Jeſus is not a Lawgiver to controul, but a Redeemer to ſave us."

brotherly kindneſs; ſo ſhall our honeſt reproofs become matter of uſeful exerciſe to that *love* which *thinketh no evil, hopeth all things, rejoiceth* even *in the* galling *truth*, and is neither *quenched* by *many waters*, nor damped by any oppoſition.

I have long wiſhed to ſee, on both ſides of the queſtion about which we unhapily divide, moderate men ſtepped out of the unthinking, noiſy croud of their party, to look each other lovingly in the face, and to convince the world that with impartial zeal they will guard *both* the foundation and the ſuperſtructure againſt *all* adverſaries, thoſe of their own party not excepted. Whoever does this *omne tulit punctum*: he is *a* real friend to *both* parties, and to the *whole* goſpel; for he cordially embraces all the people of God, and joins in one bleſſed medium the ſeemingly incompatible extremes of ſcriptural truth.—Ye men of clear heads, honeſt hearts, and humble loving ſpirits, nature and grace have formed you on purpoſe to do the church this important ſervice. Therefore without regarding the bigots of your own party, in the name of the loving Jeſus, and by his catholic ſpirit, give profeſſors public leſſons of *moderation* and *conſiſtency*, and permit me to learn thoſe rare virtues with thouſands at your feet.

The

The Gospel cries to them *Repent and believe*, and just as if God was to be the penitent believing sinner, they carelessly reply, "The Lord must do all, repentance and faith are *his* works, and they will be done in the day of his power;" and so without resistance they decently follow the stream of worldly vanities and fleshly lusts.—St. Paul cries, *If ye live after the flesh ye shall die:* We know better, answer they, there are neither *if's* nor conditions in all the gospel: He adds, *This one thing I do, leaving the things that are behind, I* PRESS *towards the mark, for the prize of my high calling in Christ Jesus—the crown of life: Be ye followers of me:* RUN also *the race that is set before you.* "What! say they, would you have us *run* and *work for life?* Will you always harp upon that legal string *do! do!* instead of telling us that we have *nothing* to do, but to believe that all is done?—St. James cries, *Shew your faith by your works; faith without works is* DEAD already, much more that which is accompanied by bad works. "What! say they, do you think the lamp of faith can be put out as a candle can be extinguished, by not being suffered to shine? We orthodox hold just the contrary: We maintain both that faith can never *die*, and that living faith is consistent not only with the omission of good works, but with the commission of the most horrid crimes."—St. Peter bids them *give all diligence to make their election sure* by *adding to their faith virtue*, &c. "Legal stuff! say they, the covenant is well ordered in all things and *sure:* Neither will our *virtue* save us, nor our sins damn us."—St. John comes next and declares, *He that sinneth is of the Devil.* "What! say they, do you think to make us converts to Arminianism, by thus insinuating that a man can be a child of God to-day and a child of the devil to morrow?"——St. Jude advances last and charges them to *keep themselves in the love of God*, and they supinely reply, "We can do nothing: Besides, we are as easy and as safe without a *frame* as with one."

With

With the ſevenfold ſhield of their antinomian faith they would fight the 12 apoſtles round, and come off, in their own imagination, more than conquerors. Nay, were Chriſt himſelf to come to them incognito, as he did to the diſciples that went to Emmaus, and ſay, *Be ye perfect as your Father who is in heaven is perfect*, it is well if, while they meaſured him from head to foot with looks of pity or ſurprize, ſome would not be bold enough to ſay with a ſneer, "You are a perfectioniſt it ſeems, a follower of poor John Weſley! Are you? For our part we are for *Chriſt* and *free grace*, but John Weſley and you are for *perfection* and *free will*."

Now, Sir, if any doctrine, humanly ſpeaking, can reſcue theſe miſtaken ſouls out of ſo dreadful a ſnare, it is that I contend for. Antinomian dreams vaniſh before it, as the noxious damps of the night before the riſing ſun. St. Paul, if they would but hear him *out*, with this one ſaying as with a thouſand rams would demoliſh all their Babels: *Circumciſion is nothing, uncircumciſion is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God*: or, to ſpeak agreeeble to our times, "Before the tribunal of Chriſt, forms of godlineſs, calvinian and arminian notions *are nothing*; confeſſions of faith and recantations of error, paſt manifeſtations and former experiences *are nothing*, but *the keeping of the commandments of God*;" the very thing which antinomians ridicule or neglect!

(2.) This doctrine is not leſs proper to animate feeble believers in their careleſs purſuit of holineſs. O if it were clearly preached and ſteadily believed—if we were fully perſuaded, we ſhall ſoon *appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt*, to anſwer for every thought, word and work, for every buſineſs we enter upon, every ſum of money we lay out, every meal we eat, every pleaſure we take, every affliction we endure, every hour we ſpend, every idle word we ſpeak, yea and every temper we ſecretly indulge,—if we knew we ſhall certainly *give account* of all the chapters we read, all the prayers we offer,

all the ſermons we hear or preach, all the ſacraments we receive; of all the motions of divine grace, all the beams of heavenly light, all the breathings of the ſpirit, all the invitations of Chriſt, all the drawings of the Father, reproofs of our friends, and checks of our own conſcience,——and if we were deeply conſcious that every neglect of duty will rob us of a degree of glory, and every wilful ſin of a jewel in our crown, if not our crown itſelf; what humble, watchful, holy, heavenly perſons would we be! How ſerious and ſelf-denying! How diligent and faithful! In a word, how angelical, and divine *in all manner of converſation!*

Did the *Woman*, the profeſſing church, cordially embrace this doctrine, ſhe would no more ſtay *in the wilderneſs* idly *talking* of *her beloved*; but actually *leaning upon him* ſhe would *come out of it* in the ſight of all her enemies. No more wrapped up in the ſhowey cloud of ideal perfection or imaginary righteouſneſs, and caſting away her cold garments, her moon-like changes of merely doctrinal apparel, ſhe would ſhine with the dazzling glory of her Lord; ſhe would burn with the hallowing fires of his love: once more ſhe would be *clothed with the Sun and have the Moon under her feet.*

Ye lukewarm Talkers of Jeſus's ardent love, if you were deeply conſcious that nothing but love ſhall enter heaven, inſtead of judging of your growth in grace, by the warmth with which you eſpouſe the tenets of Calvin or Arminius, would you not inſtantly try your ſtate by the xiii. chap. to the Corinthians, and by our Lord's alarming meſſages to the falling or fallen churches of Aſia? Springing out of your Laodicean indifference, would you not earneſtly pray for the faith of the goſpel, the *faith that works by burning love?* If *the fire is kindled*, would you not be afraid of putting it out by *quenching the Spirit?* Would not you even dread *grieving* him leſt *your love ſhould grow cold?* Far from accounting the *ſhedding abroad of the love of God in your hearts* an unneceſſary *frame*, would you

you not be *ſtraitened* till you were *baptized every one of you with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire?*

Ye who hold the doctrine of perfection without *going on to perfection*, and ye who explode it as a pernicious deluſion, and inconſiſtently publiſh hymns of ſolemn prayer for it, how would you agree from the bottom of your re-awakened hearts to ſing together in days of peace and ſocial worſhip, as you have careleſsly ſung aſunder,

O for an heart to praiſe our God!
An heart from ſin ſet free!—
An heart in ev'ry thought renew'd
And fill'd with love divine!
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine.——
"Bigotry from us" remove,
Perfect all our ſouls in Love, &c.

O ye Halcyon days! Ye days of brotherly love and genuine holineſs! if you appeared to pacify and gladden our diſtracted Jeruſalem, how ſoon would practical chriſtianity emerge from under the frothy billows of Antinomianiſm, and the proud waves of Phariſaiſm, which continually break againſt each other, and openly *foam out their own ſhame! What carefulneſs* would godly ſorrow *work in us all! What clearing of ourſelves* by caſting away our deareſt idols! *What indignation* againſt our former lukewarmneſs! *What fear* of offending either God or man; *What vehement deſire* after the full image of Chriſt! *What zeal* for his glory! And *what revenge* of our ſins! *In all things* we ſhould *approve ourſelves* for the time to come *to be clear* from the antinomian deluſion! Then would we ſee what has ſeldom been ſeen in our age, diſtinct (not oppoſed) ſocieties of meek profeſſors of the *common faith*, walking in humble love, and ſupporting each other with cheerful readineſs, like different battalions of the ſame invincible army. And if ever we perceived any contention among them, it would be only about the

loweſt place and the moſt dangerous poſt. Inſtead of *ſtriving for maſtery* they would ſtrive only who ſhould ſtand trueſt to the ſtandard of the croſs, and beſt anſwer the neglected motto of the primitive chriſtians: *Non magna loquimur ſed vivimus.* "Our religion does not conſiſt in high words but in good works."

(3.) I obſerved that this doctrine will likewiſe reconcile ſeeming contradictions in the ſcriptures and fatal differences among chriſtians: Take one inſtance of the former: What can thoſe who reject a ſecond juſtification by works make of the ſolemn words of our Lord, *By thy Words thou ſhalt be juſtified, or by thy Words thou ſhalt be condemned,* Mat. xii. 37? And by what art can they poſſibly reconcile them with St. Paul's aſſertions, Rom. iv. 5. *To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his Faith is imputed to him for Righteouſneſs.* And, v. 1. *Being juſtified by Faith, we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Accept an example of the latter. In the antinomian days of Dr. Criſp aroſe the honeſt people we call Quakers. Shocked at the general abuſe of the doctrine of juſtification by faith, they raſhly inferred it could never be from God; and ſeeing none *ſhall be juſtified* in glory but *the doers of the law,* they haſtily concluded there is but one juſtification, namely the being made inherently juſt or the being ſanctified and then declared holy. Admit our doctrine, and you have both parts of the truth, that which the Antinomians hold againſt the Quakers, and that which the Quakers maintain againſt the Antinomians. Each alone is dangerous, both together mutually defend each other, and make up the ſcriptural doctrine of juſtification, which is invincibly guarded, on the one hand by *faith* againſt Phariſees, and on the other by *works* againſt Antinomians. Reader, may both be thy portion! So ſhalt thou be eternally reinſtated both in the *favour* and *image* of God.

VI.

VI. But while I enumerate the benefits which the Church will reap from a *practical* knowledge of our second justification by works, an honest protestant, who has more zeal for, than acquaintance with the truth, advances with his heart full of holy indignation, and his mouth of objections which he says are unanswerable. Let us consider them one by one.

Obj. 1. "Your popish, antichristian doctrine I abhor, and could even burn at a stake as a witness against it. Away with your new-fangled arminian tenets! I am for old christianity, and, with St. Paul, *determined to know nothing* for justification *but Christ, and him crucified.*"

Anf. Do you indeed! Then I am sure you will not deny both Jesus Christ and St. Paul in this old christian doctrine, for Christ says *By* THY WORDS *shalt thou be justified*, and St. Paul declares, *not the hearers, but the* DOERS *of the law (of Christ) shall be justified.* Alas, how often are those who say they will *know* and have *nothing but Christ*, the first to *set him at nought* as a Prophet, by railing at his holy doctrine; or to reject him as a King, by trampling upon his royal proclamations! But *I wot that through ignorance they do it, as do also their Rulers.*

Obj. 2. "This legal doctrine robs God's dear children of their comforts and gospel-liberty, binds Moses' intolerable burden upon their free shoulders, and *intangles them again in the* galling *yoke of bondage.*"

Anf. If God's dear children have got into a *false* liberty of doing the devil's works, either by *not going into the vineyard* when they have said *Lord I go*, or by *beating their fellow servants* there instead of working with them; the sooner they are robbed of it the better: for if they continue thus free they will e'er long be *bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness.* It is the very spirit of antinomianism to represent *God's commandments* as *grievous*, and the keeping of his law as *bondage.* Not so the dutiful children of God: *their heart is* never so

much *at liberty*, as when they *run* beſt *the way of his commandments, and ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt.* Keep them from obedience, and you keep them *in the ſnare of the devil, promiſing liberty to others while they themſelves are the ſervants of corruption.*

Again, you confound the heavy yoke of the circumciſion and ceremonial bondage, with which the Galatians once intangled themſelves, with the *eaſy yoke of Jeſus Chriſt.* The former was intolerable, the latter is ſo *light a burden*, that the only way to *find reſt unto our ſouls* is to *take it upon us.* St. Paul calls a dear brother his *yoke-fellow:* You know the word *Belial* in the original ſignifies *without yoke;* they are *Sons of Belial* who ſhake off the Lord's *yoke;* and though they ſhould boaſt of their *election* as much as the Jews did, Chriſt himſelf will ſay concerning them, *Thoſe mine enemies that* refuſe my yoke, and *will not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither and ſlay them before me.* So inexpreſſibly dreadful is the end of *lawleſs* liberty!

Obj. 3. "Your doctrine is the damnable error of the Galatians, who madly left mount Sion for mount Sina, made *Chriſt the alpha and* not the *omega*, and after having *begun in the ſpirit would be made perfect by the fleſh.* This is the *other goſpel* which St. Paul thought ſo diametrically contrary to his own, that he *wiſhed* the teachers of it, though they were *angels of God*, might be even *accurſed* and *cut off.*"

Anſ. You are under a capital miſtake; St. Paul could never be ſo wild as to *curſe* himſelf, *anathematize* St. James, and wiſh the *Meſſiah* to be again *cut off:* for he himſelf taught the Romans that the *doers of the law ſhall be juſtified;* St. James evidently maintains *a juſtification by works;* and our Lord expreſsly ſays *by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified.*——Again, the apoſtle, as if he had foreſeen how his Epiſtle to the Galatians would be abuſed to antinomian purpoſes, gives us in it the moſt powerful antidotes againſt that poiſon. Take two or three inſtances. (1.) He exhorts his fallen converts to the

the *fulfilling of all the law: love one another*, ſays he *for all the Law is fulfilled in this one word, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf*, becauſe none can love his neighbour as himſelf, but he that loves God with all his heart. How different is this doctrine from the bold antinomian cry "We have nothing to do with the law!" (2.) He enumerates *the works of the fleſh, adultery, hatred, variance, wrath, ſtrife, hereſies, envyings, &c. of which*, ſays he, *I tell you before, as I have told you in time paſt, that they who* DO *ſuch things ſhall not* be juſtified in the day of judgment, or which is the ſame thing, *ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God.* How different a goſpel is this, from that which inſinuates "impenitent adulterers may be dear children of God, even while ſuch, in a very ſafe ſtate, and quite ſure of glory!" And (3.) as if this awful warning was not enough, he point-blank cautions his readers againſt the Criſpian error. *Be not deceived*, ſays he, *whatever a man (not whatever Chriſt) ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap: He that ſoweth to the fleſh ſhall reap corruption, and he that ſoweth to the ſpirit ſhall reap life everlaſting.* How amazingly ſtrong therefore muſt your prejudice be, which makes you produce this Epiſtle to thruſt *love and good works* out of the important place allotted them in all the word of God! And no where more than in this very epiſtle!

Obj. 4. "Notwithſtanding all you ſay I am perſuaded you are in the *dreadful hereſy of the Galatians*, for they were, like you, for *juſtification by the works of the law*; and St. Paul reſolutely maintained againſt them the fundamental doctrine of *juſtification by faith.*"

Anſ. If you once read over the Epiſtle to the Galatians without prejudice, and without comment, you will ſee that (1.) they had *returned to the beggarly elements of this world* by ſuperſtitiouſly *obſerving days, months, times and years.* (2.) Imagining they *could not be ſaved except they were circumciſed*, they ſubmitted even to that grievous and bloody injunction,

injunction. (3.) Exact in their uſeleſs ceremonies, and fondly hoping to be juſtified by their partial obſervance of Moſes' Law, they well-nigh forgot the merits of Chriſt, and openly trampled upon *his law*, and *walked after the fleſh*. Stirred up to contentious zeal by their new teachers, they deſpiſed the old Apoſtle's miniſtry, *hated* his perſon, and *devoured one another*. In ſhort, they truſted partly in the merit of their ſuperſtitious performances, and partly in Chriſt's merits; and on this prepoſterous foundation they *built the hay* of Jewiſh ceremonies *and the ſtubble* of fleſhly luſts. With great propriety therefore the Apoſtle called them back with ſharpneſs to the only ſure foundation, the merits of Jeſus Chriſt; and wanted them to *build upon it gold and precious ſtones*, all the works of piety and mercy, that ſpring from *faith working by love*.

Now which of theſe errors do we hold? Do we not preach preſent juſtification *by faith*, and juſtification at the bar of God *according to what a man ſoweth*, the very doctrine of this epiſtle? And do we not "ſecure the foundation" by inſiſting that both theſe juſtifications are equally by the alone *merits* of Chriſt, though the ſecond, as our Church intimates in her 12th article, is by the *evidence* of works.

Will you bear with me if I tell you my thoughts? We are all in general condemned by the Epiſtle to the Galations, for we have too much dependence on our forms of piety, ſpeculative knowledge, or paſt experience: and too little heart-felt confidence in the *merits* of Chriſt: we *ſow* too little *to the ſpirit*, and too much *to the fleſh*. But thoſe, in the next place, are peculiarly reproved by it, who *return to the beggarly elements*, the idle ways and vain faſhions *of this world*—Thoſe who make as much ado about the beggarly elements of water, about baptizing infants and dipping adults, as the *Troublers* of the church of Galatia did about circumciſing their converts *that they might glory in their fleſh*.

flesh——Those who *zealously affect* others *but not well*——Those who now despise their spiritual Fathers, *whom they* once *received as angels of God*——Those who *turn our enemies when we tell them the truth*, who heap to themselves teachers smoother than the evangelically legal apostle, and would call us *blind*, if we said as he does, *Let every man prove his own* WORK, *and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another*, Gal. vi. 4.——Those who plead for spiritual bondage while they talk of gospel liberty, and affirm that *the son of the bond woman* shall always live *with the son of the free*, that sin can never be *cast out* of the heart of believers, and that Christ and corruption shall always dwell together in this world.——And lastly, those who say there is no *falling* away *from grace* when they are already *fallen* like the Galatians, and boast of their stability chiefly because they are ignorant of their fall.

Obj. 5. "However your pharisaic doctrine flatly contradicts the gospel summed up by our Lord in these words, *He that believeth shall be saved*, and *he that believeth not shall be damned*. Here is not one word about works, all turns upon faith."

Ans. Instead of throwing such hints you might as well speak out at once, and say that Christ in Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned*, flatly contradicts what he had said Matt. xii. 37. *By thy Words thou shalt be justified, or by thy Words thou shalt be condemned.* But drop your prejudices, and you will see that the contradiction is only in your own ideas. We steadily assert as our Lord, that *he who believeth*, or *endureth unto the end believing* (for the word implies both the reality and continuance of the action) shall infallibly be saved: because faith which continues living, works to the last by love and good works, which will infallibly justify us in the day of judgment. For when faith is no more, love and good works will evidence (1.) that we were grafted in Christ by

true

true faith, (2.) that we did NO. *make shipwreck of the faith*,—that we were not *taken away* as *branches in Him which bear not fruit*, but *abode fruitful branches in the true vine*, and 3.) that we are still in him by HOLY LOVE, the precious and eternal fruit of true persevering faith. How bad is that cause which must support itself by charging an imaginary contradiction upon *the Wisdom of God*, Jesus Christ himself *!

Obj.

* This is frequently the stratagem of those who have no arguments to produce. I bore my testimony against it in the Vindication, and flattered myself that serious writers would be left forward to oppose the truth, and expose the ministers of Christ by th t injudicious way of discussing controverted points. Notwithstanding this, I have before me a little pamphlet, in which the Editor endeavours to *answer* Mr. W 's *Minutes*, by extracting from his writings passages supposed to stand in direct opposition to the Minutes. Hence in a burlesque upon the *Declaration* he tries to represent Mr. W. as a knave.

I would just observe upon that performance, (1.) that by this method of raising dust, and avoiding to reason the case fairly, every malicious infidel may blind injudious readers, and make triumphing scoffers cry out, Jesus against Christ! Saul against St. Paul! or John the Divine against John the Evangelist! as well as Wesley against John! and John against Wesley. (2.) Mr. W. having acknowledged in the beginning of the Minutes, he "had leaned to much towards Calvinism," we may naturally expect to meet in his voluminous writings, with a few expressions that look a little towards Antinomianism; and with some paragraphs, which (when detached from the context, and not considered as spoken to deep mourners in Zion, or to souls of undoubted sincerity) seem directly to favour the delusion of the present times. (3.) This may easily be accounted for, without flying to the charges of knavery or contradiction. When after working long without chearing light, we discover the ravishing day of luminous faith, we are all apt in the sincerity of our heart to speak almost as unguardly of works, as Luther did; but when the fire of antinomian temptations has frequently burned us, and consumed thousands around us, we justly dread it at last; and ceasing to lean towards Crisp's divinity, we return to St James, St John, and St. Jude, and to the latter part of St. Paul's epistles, which he too often overlooked, and to which hardly two Ministers did, upon the whole, ever do more justice than Mr. Baxter and Mr. W. (4.) A man who gives to different people, or to the same people at different times,

Obj. 6 "Your doctrine exalts man, and, by giving him room to boast, robs Christ of the glory of his grace. *The top-stone* is no more *brought forth with shouting Grace! Grace!* but Works! Works!" *unto it*; and the burden of the song in heaven will be "*Salvation to* OUR WORKS!" and no more "*Salvation to the Lamb!*"

Anf. I no less approve your godly jealousy, than I wonder at your groundless fears. To calm them, permit me once more to observe, (1.) That this doctrine is Christ's who would not be so unwise as to side with our self-righteous pride, and teach us to rob him of his own glory. It is absurd to suppose Christ would be thus against Christ, for even *Satan* is too wise *to be against Satan.* (2.) Upon our plan as well as upon Crisp's scheme, *free grace* has absolutely *all* the glory. The love and good works by which we shall be justified in the day of judgment are the fruit of faith, and *faith is the gift of God.* Christ the great object of faith, the Holy Ghost called the Spirit of faith, the power of believing the means, opportunities and will to use that power, are *all* the rich presents of God's *free grace.* All our sins, together with the imperfections of our

times, directly contrary directions, does not always contradict himself. I have a fever, and my Physician, under God, restores me to health by cooling medicines; by and by I am afflicted with the cold rheumatism, and he prescribes fomentations and warming remedies, but my injudicious Apothecary opposes him, under pretence that he goes by *no certain rule*, and *grosly contradicts himself.* Let us apply to Mr. W. and the Versifier, remembering there is less difference between a burning fever and a cold rheumatism, than between the case of the trifling antinomian and that of the dejected penitent. (5) Whoever considers without prejudice what our satyric Poet produces as *contradictions*, will find some of them do not so much as amount to an *opposition*, and that most of them do not *seem* so contradictory, as numbers of propositions that might be extracted from the oracles of God.——If the *Editor* of the *Answer to the Minutes* will compare this note with the 31st page of the *Vindication*, I hope he will find his performance answered, his indirect attack upon the Minutes frustrated, and Mr. W.'s honesty fully vindicated.

works,

works, are mercifully forgiven through the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt: our perſons and ſervices are graciouſly accepted merely for his ſake and through his alone merits: and if rewards are granted us according to the fruits of righteouſneſs we bear, it is not becauſe *we* are profitable to God, but becauſe the meritorious ſap of the root of David produces thoſe fruits, and the meritorious beams of the ſun of righteouſneſs ripen them. Thus you ſee that which way ſoever you look at our juſtification, God has *all* the glory of it, but that of turning moral agents into mere machines, a glory which we apprehend God does no more claim, than you do that of turning your coach-horſes into hobby-horſes, and your ſervants into puppets.

If *faith* on earth gives Chriſt the glory of all our ſalvation, you need not fear that *Love* (a ſuperior grace) will rob him in heaven; for *love is not puffed up, ſeeketh not her own, and does not behave herſelf unſeemly* towards a beggar on earth; much leſs will ſhe do ſo towards the Lord of glory, when ſhe has attained the zenith of heavenly perfection. Away then with all the imaginary lions you place in your way to truth! Notwithſtanding Criſp's prohibitions, like the Bereans, receive Chriſt in his *holy* doctrine, and be perſuaded that in the laſt day you will ſhout as loud as the honeſt Doctor, *Grace! Grace!* and *Salvation to the Lamb:* without ſuggeſting with him to thoſe on the left hand the blaſphemous ſhouts of *Partiality! Hypocriſy! Barbarity!* and *Damnation to the Lamb!* Thus ſhall you have all the *free grace* he juſtly boaſts of, without any of his horrid reprobating work.

Obj. 7. "How will the converted thief that did no good works be juſtified by works?"

Anſ. We mean by WORKS *the whole of our inward tempers and outward behaviour*; and how do you know the *outward behaviour* of the converted thief? Did not his reproofs, exhortations, prayers, patience,

tience, and resignation evidence the liveliness of his faith, as there was time and opportunity? (2) Can you suppose his *inward temper* was not *love* to God and man? Could he *go into paradise* without being born again? Or could he be born again and not love? Is it not said *he that loveth is born of God;* consequently *he that is born of God loveth?* Again, does not he who *loveth fulfil all the law*, and do, as says St. *Augustin*, all good works in one? And is not *the fulfilling of all the law of Christ* work enough to justify the converted thief by that law?

Obj. 8. "You say that your doctrine will make us *zealous of good works*, but I fully discharge it from that office; for *the love of Christ constraineth us* to abound in every good word and work."

Ans. (1) St. Paul, who spoke those words with more feeling than you, thought the contrary; as well as his blessed Master, or they would never have taught this doctrine. You do not, I fear, evidence the temper of a *Babe* when you are so exceedingly *wise above what* Christ preached, and *prudent above what* the Apostle *wrote*. (2) If the love of Christ in professors is so *constraining* as you say, why do good works and good tempers bear so little proportion to the great talk we hear of its irresistible efficacy? And why can those who have tasted it *return to sin as dogs to their vomit!* Why can they even curse, swear, and get drunk? be guilty of idolatry, murder, and incest? (3) If love alone is always sufficient, why did our Lord work upon his disciples hearts by the hope of *thrones* and *a kingdom*, and by the fear of a *worm that dieth not*, and a *fire that is not quenched*? Why does the Apostle stir up believers to *serve the Lord with godly fear*, by the consideration that *He is a consuming fire?* Illustrating his assertion by this awful warning, *If they* (Corah and his company) *escaped not*, but were consumed by fire from heaven, because they *refused him* (Moses) *that spake on earth; much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh*

from heaven? Why did St. Paul himself, who no doubt understood the gospel as well as Crisp and Saltmarsh, *run a race for an incorruptible crown*, and *keep his body under*, LEST *he himself should be a castaway?* O ye *orthodox* divines, and thou ludicrous verifier of an awful Declaration, instead of attempting to set Paul against Paul, and to oppose Wesley to Wesley, answer those scriptural questions; and if you cannot do it without betraying *heterodoxy*, for the Lord's sake, for the sake of thousands in Israel, keep no more from the feeble of the flock those necessary helps, which the *very chief of the apostles*, evangelical Paul, without any of your Crispian refinements, continually recommended to others, and daily used himself. And for your own soul's sake, never more prostitute these awful words, *the love of Christ constraineth us;* never more apply them to yourselves, while you refuse to treat the most venerable ambassador of Christ, I shall not say with *respectful love*, but with *common decency*.

Obj. 9. "All the formal and pharisaical ministers, who are sworn enemies to Christ and the gospel of his grace, preach your legal doctrine of *justification by works in the day of judgment.*"

Ans. And what do you infer from it? That the doctrine is false? If the inference is just, it will follow there is neither heaven nor hell; for they publicly maintain the existence of both. But suppose they now and then preach our doctrine without zeal, without living according to it, or without previously preaching the fall and a *present justification by faith in Christ* productive of peace and power, what can be expected from it? Would not the doctrine of the atonement itself be totally useless, if it were preached under such disadvantages? ——The truth is, such ministers are only for the roof, and you it seems, only for the foundation: but a *roof* unsupported by solid walls crushes to death, and a foundation without a roof is not much better than the open air. Therefore *wise masterbuilders*, like St. Paul, are for having both in their proper

proper places. Like him, when the foundation is well laid, *leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ*, they *go on to perfection*; nor will they forget as they *work* OUR *their perfection*, to *shout grace, grace*, to the last state that covers in the building; or to the *top stone*, the key that binds the solid arch.

Obj. 10. "Should I receive and avow such a doctrine, the generality of professors would rise against me; and while the warmest would call me a *papist*, an *antichrist*, and what not; my dearest christian friends would pity me as an unawakened pharisee, and fear me as a blind legalist."

Ans. *Rejoice and be exceeding glad when all men* (the godly not excepted) *shall say all manner of evil of you falsely for Christ's sake*,——for preferring *Christ's holy* doctrine to the *loose* tenets of Dr. Crisp: and remember that in our antinomian days, it is as great an honor to be called *legal* by fashionable professors, as to be branded with the name of *Methodist* by the sots who glory in their shame.

VII. As I would hope my Objector is either satisfied or silenced, before I conclude permit me a moment, Rev. Sir, to consider the two important objections which you directly or indirectly make in your Narrative.

(1.) "*I should tremble*, say you, page 21, *lest some bold metaphysician should affirm that a second justification by works is quite consistent with what is contained in Mr. W's Declaration; but that it is expressed in such* STRONG AND ABSOLUTE TERMS, *as must* FOR EVER *put the most exquisite refinements of metaphysical distinctions* AT DEFIANCE."

Ans. *For ever at* DEFIANCE!——You surprise me, Sir: I, who am as perfect a stranger to *exquisite refinements* as to Crisp's *eternal justification*, *defy* you (pardon a *bold* expression to a *bold metaphysician*) *ever* to produce out of Mr. W's Declaration, I shall not say (as you do) STRONG AND ABSOLUTE TERMS, but one single word or tittle denying or

excluding a second juſtification by works; and I appeal both to your ſecond thoughts and to the unprejudiced world, whether theſe three propoſitions of the Declaration, *We have no truſt or confidence but in the alone* MERITS *of Chriſt* FOR *juſtification in the day of judgment.*——*Works have no part in* MERITING *or* PURCHASING *our juſtification from firſt to laſt,* EITHER IN WHOLE OR IN PART.—*He is not a real Chriſtian Believer (and conſequently cannot be ſaved)* WHO DOES NOT GOOD WORKS *where there is time and opportunity.*—I appeal, I ſay, to the unprejudiced world, whether theſe three propoſitions are not highly conſiſtent with this aſſertion of our Lord, *By thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified,* that is, "Although from firſt to laſt the alone *Merits* of my life and death *purchaſe* or *deſerve* thy juſtification; yet in the day of judgment thou ſhalt be juſtified *by thy works;* that is, thy juſtification which is purchaſed by my alone *merits,* will entirely turn upon the *evidence* of thy works, according to the time and opportunity thou haſt to do them."

Who does not ſee that *to be juſtified by the* EVIDENCE *of works,* and *to be juſtified by the* MERITS *of works,* are no more phraſes of the ſame import, than *Minutes* and *Hereſy* are words of the ſame ſignification? The latter propoſition contains the error ſtrongly guarded againſt both in the Declaration and in the Minutes: the former contains an evangelical doctrine, as agreeable to the Declaration and Minutes as to the ſcriptures; a doctrine of which we were too ſparing when we "leaned too much towards calviniſm," but to which, after the example of Mr. W. we are now determined to do juſtice.

Whoever *is aſhamed of Chriſt's words,* we will proclaim them to the world. Both from our pulpits and the preſs we will ſay, *By thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned.*——Yea, *Whoever ſhall ſay to his brother, Thou Fool! ſhall be in danger of hell fire,* and *whoſoever maketh a lie ſhall have his part in the lake which*

which burneth with fire and brimſtone, for as *with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs*, or diſbelieveth to unrighteouſneſs, ſo *with the mouth confeſſion is made to* SALVATION, or *hard ſpeeches* are uttered to DAMNATION. Reſerve therefore, reverend Sir, your public praiſes for a more proper occaſion than that which cauſed their breaking out in your Narrative. BLESSED BE GOD, ſay you, page 16, Mr. *Weſley and* 53 *of his preachers do not agree with Mr. Olivers in the material article of a ſecond juſtification by works.* Indeed Sir, you are greatly miſtaken, for we *do* agree with him, and ſhall continue ſo to do, till you have proved he does not agree with Jeſus Chriſt, or that our doctrine is not perfectly conſiſtent both with the Scriptures and the Declaration.

(2.) Your ſecond objection is not ſo formal as the firſt; it muſt be made up of broad *hints* ſcattered through your Narrative, and they amount to this, "Your pretended difference between juſtification *by the* MERIT *of works*, and juſtification *by the* EVIDENCE *of works*, and between a 1ſt and 2d juſtification, is founded upon *the ſubtilties of metaphyſical diſtinctions:* If what you ſay wears the aſpect of truth, it is becauſe *you give a new turn to* error, by *the almoſt magical power of metaphyſical diſtinctions.*" Page 16, 20, and 21.

Give me leave, Sir, to anſwer this objection by two appeals, one to the moſt ignorant collier in my pariſh, and the other to your own ſenſible child; and if they can at once underſtand my meaning, you will ſee that my *metaphyſical diſtinctions*, as you are pleaſed to call them, are nothing but the *dictates of common ſenſe.* I begin with the collier.

Thomas, I ſtand here before the Judge accuſed of having robbed the Rev. Mr. Shirley near Bath, laſt month on ſuch an evening; can you ſpeak a word for me? Thomas turns to the Judge and ſays, "Pleaſe your Honor the accuſation is falſe, for our parſon was in Madeley-wood, and I can make oath of it, for he even reproved me for ſwearing at

our pit's mouth that very evening." By his evidence the Judge acquits me. Now, Sir, ask curling Tom whether I am acquitted and *justified* by his *merits* or by the simple *evidence* he has given, and he will tell you, "Aye to be sure by the *evidence*: Though I am no scholar, I know very well if our methodist parson is not hanged, it is none of my deservings." Thus, Sir, an ignorant collier, as great a stranger to *your metaphysics* as you are to *his mandrel*, discovers at once a material difference between *justification by the* EVIDENCE, and *justification by the* MERITS *of a witness*.

My 2d Appeal is to your sensible child. By a plain comparison I hope to make him at once understand both the difference there is between our 1st and 2d justification, and the propriety of that difference. The lovely boy is old enough, I suppose, to follow the gardener and me to yonder nursery. Having shewn him the operation of *grafting*, and pointing at the crab-tree newly grafted, "My dear child, would I say, though hitherto this tree has produced nothing but crabs, yet by the skill of the gardener, who has just fixed in it that good little branch, it is now made an *apple-tree*, I *justify* and warrant it such. (Here is an emblem of our *first* justification *by faith!*) In three or four years, if we live, we will come again and see it: *If it* thrives and *bears fruit, well:* we shall then by that mark justify it a second time, we shall declare that it is a *good* apple-tree indeed, and fit to be transplanted from this wild nursery into a delightful orchard. But if we find that the old crab-stock, instead of nourishing the graft, spends all its sap in producing wild shoots and sour crabs; or if it is a *tree whose fruit withereth without fruit, twice dead* (dead in the graft and in the stock) *plucked up by the root*, or quite cankered, far from declaring *it a good tree*, we shall pass sentence of condemnation upon it, and say, *Cut it down: Why cumbereth it the ground? For every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.*"

Here

Here is an emblem of our *fecond* juſtification *by works*, or of the condemnation that will infallibly overtake thoſe Laodicean profeſſors and wretched apoſtates, whoſe faith is not ſhewn by works, where there is time and opportunity.

Inſtead of offering an inſult to your ſuperior underſtanding, in attempting to explain by *metaphyſical diſtinctions* what I ſuppoſe your ſenſible child has already underſtood by the help of a grafting-knife, I ſhall leave you to conſider whether ſcripture, reaſon, and candor, do not join their influence to make you acknowledge, at leaſt in the court of your own conſcience, that you have put as wrong a conſtruction upon Mr. W.'s Declaration as upon his Minutes, and by that means inadvertently given another *raſh* touch to the ark of practical religion, and to the character of one of the greateſt miniſters in the world.

I am with due reſpect,

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

Your obedient ſervant, in the bond of the practical goſpel of Chriſt,

THE VINDICATOR.

SECOND

SECOND LETTER.

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

HAVING endeavoured in my laſt to do juſtice to the practical goſpel of Chriſt, and Mr. W.'s awful Declaration; I paſs on to the other miſtakes of your Narrative. That which ſtrikes me next is the PUBLIC RECANTATION OF YOUR uſeful SERMONS IN THE FACE OF THE WHOLE WORLD, Page 22.

I. Oh! Sir, what have you done! Do you not know that your Sermons contain not only the legally evangelical doctrine of the Minutes, but likewiſe all the doctrines which moderate Calviniſts eſteem the marrow of the goſpel? And ſhall all be treated alike? *Wilt thou alſo deſtroy the righteous with the wicked? That be far from thee to do after this manner!* Thus did a good man formerly plead the cauſe of a *wicked* city, and thus I plead that of your *good* ſermons, thoſe twelve valuable, though unripe fruits of your miniſterial labours. Upon this plea the infamous city would have been ſpared, had only *ten* good men been found in it. Now, Sir, ſpare a valuable book for the ſake of a *thouſand* excellent things it contains. But if you are inflexible, and ſtill wiſh it "burned," imitate at leaſt the kind angels who ſent Lot out of the fiery overthrow, and except all the evangelical pages of the unfortunate volume.

Were it not ridiculous to compare wars which coſt us only a little ink, and our friends a few pence,

pence, to those which cost armies their blood, and kingdoms their treasures, I would be tempted to say you imitate the Dutch in their last effort to balance the victory, and secure the field. When they are pressed by the French, rather than yield, they break their dykes, let in the sea upon themselves, and lay all their fine gardens and rich pastures under water: but before they have recourse to that strange expedient, they prudently save all the valuable goods they can. Why should you not follow them in their prudential care, as you seem to do in their bold stratagem? When you publicly lay your useful book under the bitter waters of an anathema, why do you save absolutely nothing? Why must gospel truths, more precious than the wealth of Holland and the gold of Ophir, lie for ever under the severe scourge of your recantation? suppose you had *recanted* your 3d Sermon, *The way to eternal life*, in opposition to Mysticism; and *burned* the 4th, *Salvation by Christ for Jews and Gentiles*, in honor of Calvinism, could you not have spared the rest?

If you say, you may do what you please with your own; I answer, Your book publicly exposed to sale, and bought perhaps by thousands, is, in one sense, no more your own; it belongs to the purchasers, before whom you lay, I fear, a dangerous example; for when they shall hear that the Author has *publicly recanted it in the face of the whole world*, it will be a temptation to them to slight the gospel it contains, and perhaps to ridicule it *in the face of the whole world*.

You add, "it favours too strongly of mysticism." Some passages are a little ~~tainted~~ with Mr. Law's capital error, and you might have pointed them out; but if you think *mysticism* is intrinsecally bad, you are under a mistake. One of the greatest *mystics*, next to Solomon, is Thomas à Kempis, and a few errors excepted, I would no more burn his *Imitation of Jesus Christ*, than the Song of Solomon, and Mr.

Mr. Romaine's edifying paraphrase of the 107th Psalm.

You urge also, "Your sermons savour too much of *free will.*" Alas! Sir, can you recant *free will*? Was not your will as *free* when you recanted your sermons as when you composed them? Is there not as much *free will* expressed in this one line of the gospel as in all your sermons, *I would have gathered you, and ye would not?* Do not *free will offerings with an holy worship* delight the Lord more than *forced*, and if I may be allowed the expression, *bound-will* services? Is not the *free will* with which the martyrs went to the stake as worthy of our highest admiration, as the *mysticism* of the Canticles is of our deepest attention? If all that strongly "savours of free will" must be "burned," Ye heavens! what Smithfield work will there be in your lucid plains! Wo to Saints! Wo to Angels! for they are all *free-willing* Beings,—all full of *free will;* Nor can you deny it, unless you suppose they are *bound* by irresistible decrees, as the Heathens fancied their Deities were *hampered* with the adamantine chains of an imaginary something they called *Fate*; witness their *Fata vetant*, and *Fata jubent*, and *ineluctabile Fatum.*

Pardon, Rev. Sir, the oddity of these exclamations. I am so grieved at the great advantage we give infidels against the gospel, by making it ridiculous, that I could try even the method of Horace, to bring my friends back from the fashionable refinements of Crisp, to the plain truth as it is in Jesus.

Ridiculum acri
Fortius ac melius stultas plerumque secat res.

Nor is this the only bad tendency of your new doctrine: for by exploding the *freedom* of the will, you rob us of *free* agency; you afford the wicked, who determine to continue in sin, the best excuse in the world to do it without either shame or remorse;

morſe; you make us mere machines, and indirectly reflect upon the wiſdom of our Lord for ſaying to a ſet of Jewiſh machines, *I would and ye would not.* But what is ſtill more deplorable, you inadvertently repreſent it an unwiſe thing in God to judge the world in righteouſneſs; and your *new* glaſs ſhews his vindictive juſtice in the ſame unfavourable light, in which England ſaw two years ago the behaviour of a great monarch, who was expoſed in the public papers for unmercifully cutting with a whip, and tearing with ſpurs, the horſes worked in the tapeſtry of his royal apartment, becauſe they did not prance and gallop at his nod.

If a commendable, but immoderate fear of Pelagius's doctrine drove you into that of St. Auguſtin, the oracle of all the Dominicans, Thomiſts, Janſeniſts, and all other Roman catholic predeſtinarians, you need not go ſo far beyond him as to recant all your ſermons, becauſe you mention perhaps three or four times, the freedom of our will in the whole volumn. "Let no one, ſays judicious Melancthon, be offended at the word *free will,* (liberum arbitrium) for St. Auguſtin himſelf uſes it in many volumes, and that almoſt in every page, even to the ſurfeit of the reader."

The moſt ingenious Calviniſt that ever wrote againſt *free will,* is, I think, Mr. Edwards of New England. And his fine ſyſtem turns upon a compariſon by which it may be overturned, and the *freedom* of the will demonſtrated.

The will, ſays he, (if I remember right) is like an even balance which can never turn without a weight, and muſt *neceſſarily* turn with one.—But whence comes the weight that *neceſſarily* turns it? From the underſtanding, anſwers he; the laſt dictate of the underſtanding *neceſſarily* turns the will.—And is the underſtanding alſo *neceſſarily* determined? Yes, by the effect which the objects around us *neceſſarily* have upon us, and by the circumſtances in which we *neceſſarily* find ourſelves; ſo that from firſt to laſt our tempers, words and actions *neceſſarily* follow

each

each other, and the circumſtances that give them birth, as the 2d, 3d, and 4th links of a chain follow the firſt, when it is drawn along. Hence the eternal, infallible, irreſiſtible, univerſal concatenation of events, both in the moral and material world. This is, if I miſtake not, the ſcheme of that great divine, and he ſpends no leſs than 414 large pages in trying to eſtabliſh it.

I would juſt obſerve upon it, that it makes the firſt Cauſe, or firſt Mover, the only *free Agent* in the world: all others being *neceſſarily* bound with the chain of his decrees, drawn along by the irreſiſtible motion of his arm, or, which is the ſame, intangled in *forcible* circumſtances unalterable fixed by his immutable counſel.

And yet, even upon this ſcheme you needed not, Sir, be ſo afraid of *free will*; for if the *will* is like an even balance, it is *free* in itſelf, though it is only with what I beg leave to call a *mechanical freedom*; for an even balance, you know, is *free* to turn either way.

But with reſpect to our ingenious author's aſſertion, that the will cannot turn without a weight, becauſe an even balance cannot; I muſt conſider it as a mere begging the queſtion, if not as an abſurdity. What is a balance, but *lifeleſs matter?* And what is the will, but the living *active ſoul, ſpringing up in its willing capacity, and ſelf-exerting, ſelf-determining power?* O how tottering is the mighty fabric raiſed, I ſhall not ſay upon ſuch a fine-ſpun metaphyſical ſpeculation, but upon ſo weak a foundation as a compariſon, which ſuppoſes that two things ſo widely different as *ſpirit* and *matter*, a *living ſoul* and a *lifeleſs balance*, are *exactly* alike with the reference to ſelf-determination! Juſt as if a *ſpirit* made after the image of the *living, free* and *powerful God*, was no more capable of determining itſelf, than an horizontal beam ſupporting two equal copper bowls by ſix ſilken ſtrings.

I am ſorry, Sir, to diſſent from ſuch a reſpectable Divine as yourſelf, but as I have no taſte for new

refinements,

refinements, and cannot even conceive how far actions can be *morally* good or evil, any farther than our *free will* is concerned in them; I muſt follow the univerſal experience of mankind, and ſide with the author of the ſermons againſt the author of the Narrative, concerning the *freedom* of the will.

Nor is this *freedom* derogatory to *free grace*; for as it was *free grace* that gave an upright *free will* to Adam at his creation, ſo whenever his fallen children think or act aright, it is becauſe their *free will* is mercifully prevented, touched, and ſo far rectified by *free grace*.

However, it muſt be granted that faſhionable profeſſors, and the large book of Mr. Edwards are in general for you; but when you maintained *the freedom of the will*, Jeſus Chriſt and the Goſpel were on your ſide. To the end of the world this plain, peremptory aſſertion of our Lord, *I would and ye would not*, will alone throw down the ſophiſms, and ſilence the objections of the moſt ſubtle philoſophers againſt *free will*. When I conſider what it implies, far from ſuppoſing the will is like a lifeleſs pair of ſcales, *neceſſarily* turned by the leaſt weight; I ſee it is ſuch a ſtrong, ſelf-determining power, that it can reſiſt the effect of the moſt amazing weights: keep itſelf inflexible under all the warnings, threatnings, miracles, promiſes, entreaties, and tears of the Son of God; and remain obſtinately unmoved under all the ſtrivings of his holy Spirit. Yes, put in one ſcale the moſt ſtupendous weights, for inſtance the hopes of heavenly joys, and the dread of helliſh torments; and only the gaudy feather of honour, or the breaking bubble of worldly joy in the other; if the Will caſts itſelf into the light ſcale, the feather or bubble will inſtantly preponderate. Nor is the power of the rectified Will leſs wonderful; for though you ſhould put all the kingdoms of the world and their glory in the ſcale, and nothing but *the reproach of Chriſt* in the other; yet if the

Will *freely* leaps into the infamous ſcale, a crown of thorns eaſily outweighs a thouſand golden crowns, and devouring flame makes ten thouſand thorns kick the beam.

Thus it appears the will can be perſuaded, never forced. You may bend it by moral ſuaſions, but if you do it farther than it freely gives way, you *break*, you abſolutely *deſtroy it*. A Will forced is no more a *Will*, it is mere *compulſion*; freedom is not leſs eſſential to it, than moral agency to man. Nor do I go, in theſe obſervations upon the freedom of the will, one ſtep farther than honeſt John Bunyan, whom all the Calviniſts ſo deſervedly admire. In his *Holy War* he tells us there is but one Lord *Will be-will* in the town of Man's ſoul: whether he ſerves *Diabolus* or *Shaddai*, he is Lord *Will-be-will ſtill*, "*a man of great ſtrength, reſolution, and courage, whom in his occaſion no one can turn*," if he does not freely turn or yield to be turned.

I hope, Sir, theſe hints upon the harmleſſneſs of *myſticiſm*, and the important doctrine of our *free agency* will convince you, and the purchaſers of your ſermons, that you have been too precipitate in *publicly recanting them in the face of the whole world*, eſpecially the *ninth*.

If you aſk why I particularly intereſt myſelf in the behalf of that one diſcourſe, I will let you into the myſtery. At the firſt reading I liked and adopted it; I cut it out of the volume in which it was bound, put it in my ſermon-caſe, and preached it in my Church. The title of it is, you know, *Juſtification by Faith*, and among ſeveral ſtriking things on the ſubject, you quote twice this excellent paſſage out of our homilies. "Juſtification by faith implies a ſure truſt and confidence a man hath in God, that by the *merits* of Chriſt his ſins are forgiven, and he is reconciled to the favour of God." O Sir, why did you not except it in your recantation, both for the honour of our Church and your own?

Were

Were I to print and disperse such an advertisement as this, "Eight years ago I preached in my Church a sermon intitled JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, composed by the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Shirley, to convince Papists and Pharisees that we are accepted through the alone *merits* of Christ; but I see better now, *I wish this sermon had been burned and I publicly recant it in the face of the whole world*;" how would the popish priest of Madeley rejoice! And how will that of Loughrea triumph, when he hears *you* have actually done it in your Narrative! What will your protestant parishioners, to whom your book is dedicated, say, when the surprising news reaches Ireland? And what will the world think, when they see you warmly plead in August for *Justification by Faith*, as being, "the foundation that must by all means be secured;" and publicly recant in September your own excellent *sermon of Justification by Faith*.

Indeed, Sir, though I admire your candor in acknowledging there are some exceptionable passages in your discourses, and your humility in readily giving them up, I can no more approve your readiness in making, than in insisting upon *formal recantations*. We cannot be too careful in dealing in that kind of ware; and it is extremely dangerous to do it by wholesale; as by that means we may give up, or *seem* to give up, *before the whole world*, precious truths delivered by Christ himself, and brought down to us in streams of the blood of martyrs.

Among some blunt expostulations that Mr. Wesley erased in my fifth letter, as being too severe, he kindly but unhappily struck out this, "*Before* you could with candor insist upon a recantation of Mr. W's Minutes, should you not have recanted yourself the passages of your own sermons where the same doctrines are maintained; and have sent your recantation through the land together with your circular letter?" Had this been published, it might have convinced you of the unseasonableness

ſeaſonableneſs of your recantation: thus this *ſecond haſty ſtep* would have been prevented; and if I dwell ſo long upon it now, believe me, Sir, it is chiefly to prevent a *third*.

And now your ſermons are recanted, is the vindication of Mr. W's Minutes invalidated?—Not at all; for you have not yet recanted the Bath Hymn-book, nor can you ever get Mr. Henry, Mr. Williams, and a tribe of other anti-Criſpian, though Calviniſt divines now in glory, to recant with you; much leſs the Prophets, Apoſtles, and Chriſt himſelf, on whoſe irrefragable teſtimony we chiefly reſt our doctrine.

II. As I have pleaded out the cauſe of *free will* againſt *bound will*, or that of your Sermons againſt your Narrative; and am inſenſibly come to the Vindication, give me leave, Sir, to ſpeak a word alſo for that performance and the author of it.

You ſay he has "*attempted a vindication of the Minutes*;" but do not ſome people think he has likewiſe *executed* it? And have you proved he has not?

You reply, *There would be a great impropriety in my giving a full and particular anſwer to thoſe letters, becauſe the author did all he could to revoke them, and has given me ample ſatisfaction in his letter of ſubmiſſion.* Indeed, Sir, you quiet miſtook the nature of that *ſubmiſſion*: it had abſolutely no reference to the *arguments* of the Vindication. It only reſpected the *polemic dreſs* in which the Vindicator had put them. You might have been convinced of it by this paragraph of his letter of ſubmiſſion. "I was going to preach when I had the news of your happy accommodation, and was no ſooner out of church, than I wrote to beg my Vindication might not appear in the *dreſs* in which I had put it. I did not then, nor do I yet repent having written upon the Minutes; but *as matters are now*, I am very ſorry I did not write in a general manner, without taking notice of the circular letter and

mentioning

mentioning your dear name." He begs therefore you will consider his letter of submission as a reason not to give a *full or particular answer* to his ARGUMENTS on the contrary, if you can prove they want solidity, a *letter of thanks* shall follow his *letter of submission*; if he is wrong, he sincerely desires to be set right.

You add however, that he has *broken the Minutes into sentences and half sentences, and by refining upon each of the detached particles has given a new turn to the whole.* But he appeals to every impartial Reader whether he has not, like a candid man, first considered them all together, and then every one asunder. He begs to be informed whether an artist can better inquire into the goodness of a watch, than by making first his observations on the whole movement in general, and then by taking it to pieces, that he may examine every part with greater attention. And he desires you would shew whether what you are pleased to call a new turn, is not preferable to the heretical turn some persons give them; and whether it is not equally, if not better adapted to the literal meaning of the words, as well as more agreeable to the antinomian state of the Church, the general tenor of the propositions, and the system of doctrine maintained by Mr. W. for near 40 years.

The Vindicator objects likewise to your asserting, page 21, that *when he first saw the Minutes, he expressed to Lady Huntingdon his* ABHORRENCE *of them:* had you said *surprise*, the expression would have been strictly just; but that of *abhorrence* is far too strong. Her Ladyship, who testified her *detestation* of them in the strongest terms, might easily mistake his *abhorrence* of the sense fixed upon the Minutes, for an abhorrence of the Minutes themselves; but she may recollect that far from ever granting they had that sense, he said again and again, even in their first conversation upon them, "Certainly, my Lady, Mr. W. can mean no such thing; he will explain himself."

But ſuppoſing he had at firſt been ſo far wrought upon by the jealous fears of Lady Huntingdon, as to expreſs as great an *abhorrence* of the Minutes, as the miſtaken diſciples did of the perſon of our Lord, when they took him for an apparition, and *cried out for fear;* would this excuſe either him or you, Sir, for reſolutely continuing in a miſtake, in the midſt of a variety of means and calls to get out of it? And if the Vindicator, before he had weighed the Minutes in the balance of the ſanctuary, had a mind to take his pen, and condemn them as dangerouſly legal, what can you fairly conclude from it, but that he is not partial to Mr. W. and has alſo "leaned ſo much towards Calviniſm," as not inſtantly to diſcover and *rejoice in the truth?*

In your laſt page you take your friendly leave of the Vindicator, by ſaying you *deſire in love to caſt a veil over all apparent miſtakes of his judgment on this occaſion;* but as he is not conſcious of *all* theſe *apparent miſtakes*, he begs you would in love take off the veil you have caſt upon them, that he may ſee, and rectify at leaſt thoſe which are capital.

III. And that you may not haſtily conclude he was *miſtaken* in his vindication of that article that touches upon *Merit*, he embraces this opportunity of preſenting you with another quotation from the John Weſley of the laſt century, he means Mr. Baxter, the moſt judicous divine, as well as the greateſt, moſt uſeful, and moſt laborious preacher of his age.

In his *Catholic Theology*, anſwering the objections of an Antinomian, he ſays: *Merit* is a word I perceive you are againſt, you may therefore chuſe any other of the ſame ſignification, and we will forbear this rather than offend you. But yet tell me, (1.) What if the words αξιος and αξια where tranſlated *deſerving* and *merit*, would it not be as true a tranſlation as *worthy* and *worthineſs*, when it is the ſame thing that is meant? (2.) Do not all the ancient Teachers of the Churches, ſince the Apoſtles,

Apoſtles, particularly apply the names ἀξια and *meritum* to believers? And if you perſuade men that all theſe teachers were Papiſts, will you not perſuade moſt that believe you, to be Papiſts too? (3.) Are not *reward* and *merit* or *deſert* relative words, as *puniſhment* and *guilt*, *maſter* and *ſervant*, *huſband* and *wife?* And is there any reward which is not *meriti præmium*, the reward of ſome merit? Again,

Is it not the ſecond article of our faith, and next to *believing there is a God*, that *He is the* REWARDER *of them that diligently ſeek him?* When you thus extirpate faith and godlineſs, on pretence of crying down *merit*, you ſee what *over-doing* tends to. And indeed by the ſame reaſon that men deny a *reward* to duty the faultineſs being pardoned through Chriſt) they would infer there is no *puniſhment* for ſin; for if God will not do good to the righteous, neither will he do evil to the wicked; he is like the God of Epicurus, he does not trouble himſelf about us, nor about the merit or demerit of our actions. But David knew better, *The Lord*, ſays he, *plentiouſly* REWARDETH *the proud doers*, and *verily there is a* REWARD *for the righteous*, for *there is a God that judgeth the earth*, that ſees matter of praiſe or diſpraiſe, rewardableneſs or worthineſs of puniſhment in all the actions of men. This is, Sir, all Mr. Baxter and Mr. W. mean by *merit* or *demerit*; and if the Vindicator is wrong for thinking they are both in the right, pleaſe to remove the *veil* that conceals his *miſtake*.

IV. As one of his correſpondents deſires him to explain himſelf a little more upon the article of the Minutes which reſpects *undervaluing ourſelves;* and as you probably place the arguments he has advanced upon that head among his *apparent miſtakes* he takes likewiſe this opportunity of making ſome additional obſervations on that delicate ſubject.

How

How we can *eſteem every man better than ourſelves*, and ourſelves the *chief of ſinners*, or the *leaſt of ſaints*, ſeems not ſo much a calculation for the underſtanding, as for the lowly, contrite and loving heart. It puzzles the former, but the latter at once makes it out. Nevertheleſs the ſeeming contradiction may perhaps be reconciled to reaſon by theſe reflections.

(1.) If friendſhip brings the greateſt monarch down from his throne, and makes him ſit on the ſame couch with his favourites; may not brotherly love, much more powerful than natural friendſhip, may not humility excited by the example of Chriſt waſhing his diſciples feet, may not a deep regard for that precept, *he that will be greateſt among you let him be the leaſt of all*, ſink the true chriſtian in the duſt, and make him lie in ſpirit at the feet of every one?

(2.) A well-bred perſon uncovers himſelf, bows, and declares even to his inferiors, that he is their "moſt humble ſervant." This affected civility of the world is but an apiſh imitation of the genuine humility of the church, and if thoſe who cuſtomarily ſpeak humble words without meaning may yet be honeſt men, how much more the ſaints, who have *truth written in their inward parts*, and *ſpeak out of the abundance of their* humble *hearts!*

(3.) He who walks in the light of divine love ſees ſomething of God's ſpiritual, moral, or natural image in all men, the worſt not excepted; and at the ſight, that which is merely creaturely in him (by a kind of ſpiritual inſtinct found in all who are *born of the ſpirit*) directly bows to that which is of God in another. He imitates the captain of a firſt rate man of war, who, upon ſeeing the King or Queen coming up in a ſmall boat, forgetting the enormous ſize of his ſhip, or conſidering it is the King's own ſhip, immediately ſtrikes his colours; and the greater veſſel, conſiſtently with wiſdom and truth, pays reſpect to the leſs.

(4.)

(4.) The moſt eminent ſaint, having known more of the workings of corruption in his own breaſt, than he can poſſibly know of the wickedneſs of any other man's heart, may with great truth (according to his preſent views and former feelings to the internal evil he has overcome) call himſelf *the chief of ſinners.*

(5.) Nor does he know but if the feebleſt believers had had all his talents and graces, with all his opportunities of doing and receiving good, they would have made far ſuperior advances in the chriſtian life; and in this view alſo, without hypocritical humility, he prefers the leaſt ſaint to himſelf. Thus, although according to the humble light of *others*, all true believers certainly *undervalue*, yet according to *their own* humble light, they make a true eſtimate of *themſelves.*

V. The Vindicator having thus ſolved a problem of godlineſs, which you have undoubtedly ranked among his *apparent miſtakes*, he takes the liberty of preſenting you with a liſt of ſome of *your own* "apparent miſtakes on this occaſion."

(1.) In the very letter in which you recant your circular letter, you deſire Mr. W. to *give up the fatal errors of the Minutes*, though you have not yet *proved* they contain one; you ſtill affirm *they appear to you evidently ſubverſive of the fundamentals of chriſtianity*, that is in plain Engliſh, ſtill "dreadfully heretical;" and you produce a letter which aſſerts alſo, without ſhadow of proof, that the *Minutes* were *given for the eſtabliſhment of another foundation than that which is laid*,—that they are *repugnant to ſcripture, the whole plan of man's ſalvation under the new covenant of grace, and alſo to the clear meaning of our eſtabliſhed Church, as well as to all other proteſtant Churches.*

(2.) You declare in your Narrative, that *when you caſt your eye over the Minutes you are juſt where you was*, and aſſure the public that *nothing inferior*

to

to an ATTACK UPON THE FOUNDATION *of our hope, through the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ, could have been an object sufficient to engage you in its defence:* Thus, by continuing to insinuate such an ATTACK was really made, you continue to wound Mr. W. in the tendereſt part.

(3.) Although Mr. W. and 53 of his fellow-labourers have let you quietly *secure the foundation* (which, by the bye, had been only ſhaken in your own ideas, and was perfectly ſecured by theſe expreſs words of the Minutes, "not by the merit of works," but by "believing in Chriſt", yet far from allowing them to *secure the ſuperſtructure* in their turn, which would be nothing but juſt, you begin already a conteſt with them about *our ſecond juſtification by works in the day of judgment.*

(4.) Inſtead of frankly acknowledging the raſhneſs of your ſtep, and the greatneſs of your miſtake, with reſpect to the Minutes, you make a bad matter worſe, by treating the Declaration as you have treated them; forcing upon it a dangerous ſenſe, no leſs contrary to the ſcriptures, than to Mr. W.'s meaning, and the import of the words.

(5.) When you ſpeak of the dreadful charges you have brought againſt the Minutes, you ſoftly call them *miſconſtructions you* MAY SEEM *to have made of their meaning*, Page 22 Line 4. Nor is your *Acknowledgment* much ſtronger than your *may ſeem;* at leaſt it does not appear to many, adequate to the hurt done by your circular letter to the practical goſpel of Chriſt, and the reputation of his eminent ſervant, thouſands of whoſe friends you have grieved, offended, or ſtumbled: while you have confirmed thouſands of his enemies in their hard thoughts of him, and in their unjuſt contempt of his miniſtry.

(6.) And laſtly, far from candidly enquiring into the merit of the arguments advanced in the Vindication, you repreſent them as mere *metaphyſical diſtinctions;* or caſt, as a veil over them, a friendly

friendly ſubmiſſive *letter of condolence*, which was never intended for the uſe to which you have put it.

Therefore the Vindicator, who does not admire a peace founded upon a *may ſeem* on your part, and on Mr. W.'s part upon a *Declaration*, to which you have already fixed a wrong, unſcriptural ſenſe of your own; takes this public method to inform you, he thinks his arguments, in favour of Mr. W.'s anti-Criſpian propoſitions, rational, ſcriptural, and ſolid; and once more he begs you would remove the veil you have hitherto "caſt over all the apparent miſtakes of his judgment on this occaſion" that he may ſee whether the *antinomian* goſpel of Dr. Criſp is preferable to the *practical* goſpel which Mr. W. endeavours to reſtore to its primitive and ſcriptural luſtre.

VI. Having thus finiſhed my remarks upon the miſtakes of your Narrative, I gladly take my leave of controverſy for this time: Would to God it were for ever! I do no more like it than I do applying a cauſtic to the back of my friends; it is diſagreeable to me and painful to them, and, nevertheleſs, it muſt be done when their health and mine is at ſtake.

I aſſure you, Sir, I do not love the warlike dreſs of the Vindicator any more than David did the heavy armour of Saul. With gladneſs therefore I caſt it aſide to throw myſelf at your feet, and proteſt to you, and although I thought it my *duty* to write to you with the utmoſt *plainneſs*, *frankneſs*, and *honeſty*; the deſign of doing it with *bitterneſs* never entered my heart. However, for every "*bitter expreſſion*" that may have dropped from my ſharp vindicating pen, I aſk you pardon; but it muſt be *in general*, for neither friends nor foes have yet *particularly* pointed out to me *one* ſuch expreſſion.

You have accepted of *a letter of ſubmiſſion* from me; let, I beſeech you, a concluding *paragraph of ſubmiſſion* meet alſo with your favourable acceptance

ance. You condescend, Rev. Sir, to call me your "learned friend." *Learning* is an accomplishment I never pretended to; but your *friendship* is an honor I shall always highly esteem, and do at this time value above my own brother's love. Appearances are little against me, I feel I am a thorn in your flesh; but I am persuaded it is a *necessary* one, and this persuasion reconciles me to the thankless and disagreeable part I act.

If Ephraim must vex Judah, like Judah bear with Ephraim, till, happily tired of their contention, they feel the truth of Terence's words, **Amantium* (why not *credentium*) *iræ amoris redintegratio est.* I can assure you, my dear Sir, without metaphysical distinction, I love and honor you, as truly as I dislike the rashness of your well-meant zeal. The motto I thought myself obliged to follow was †*E bello pax;* but that which I delight in is ‡*In bello pax;* may we make them harmonize till we learn war and polemic divinity no more!

My Vindication cost me tears of fear, lest I should have wounded you too deep. That fear I find, was groundless; but should you feel a little for the great truths and the great minister I vindicate, these expostulations will wound me, and probably cost me tears again.

If in the mean time we offend our weak brethren; let us do something to lessen the offence till it is removed. Let us shew them we make war without so much as shyness. Should you ever come to the next county, as you did last summer, honor me with a line, and I shall gladly wait upon you, and shew you (if you permit me) the way to my pulpit, where I shall think myself highly favoured to see you "secure the foundation and hear you inforce the doctrine of *justification by faith*,

* The misunderstandings of lovers (why not of believers) and in a renewal and increase of love.

† We make war in order to get peace.

‡ We enjoy peace in the midst of war.

which

which you fear we attack. And ſhould I ever be within 30 miles of the city where you reſide, I ſhall go to ſubmit myſelf to you, and beg leave to aſſiſt you in reading prayers for you, or giving the cup with you. Thus ſhall we convince the world that controverſy may be conſcientiouſly carried on without interruption of brotherly love; and I ſhall have the peculiar pleaſure of teſtifying to you in perſon, how ſincerely I am,

Honored and dear Sir,

Your ſubmiſſive and obedient ſervant
in the bond of a *practical* goſpel,

J. F.

THIRD LETTER.

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

IF I miſtake not the workings of my heart, a concern for St. James's *pure and undefiled religion* excites me to take the pen once more, and may account for the readineſs with which I have met you in the dangerous field of controverſy. You may poſſibly think mere partiality to Mr. W. has inſpired me with that boldneſs; and others may be ready to ſay as Eliab, We *know the pride and naughtineſs of thy heart: Thou art come down that thou mighteſt ſee the battle:* But may I not anſwer with David? *Is there not a cauſe?*

Is it not highly neceſſary to make a ſtand againſt *Antinomianiſm?* Is not that gigantic *Man of Sin* a more dangerous enemy to *king* Jeſus, than the champion of the Philiſtines was to king Saul? Has he not defied more than forty days the armies and arms, the people and truths of the living God? By audaciouſly daring the thouſands in Iſrael, has he not made all the faint-hearted among them aſhamed to *ſtand* in *the whole armour of God*, afraid to defend the important poſt of *Duty?* And have not many left it already, openly running away, flying into the dens and caves of earthly-mindedneſs, *putting their light under a buſhel*, and even burying themſelves alive in the noiſome grave of profaneneſs?

Multitudes indeed ſtill keep the field, ſtill make an open profeſſion of godlineſs. But how few of theſe *endure hardſhip as good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt!* How

How many have already caſt away *the ſhield of* goſpel *faith*, the *faith which works by love!* What numbers dread the *Croſs*, the heavenly ſtandard they ſhould ſteadily bear, or reſolutely follow! Whilſt in pompous ſpeeches they extol that of Jeſus, how do they upon the moſt frivolous pretence refuſe to *take up* their own! Did the maſſy ſtaff of Goliah's ſpear ſeem more terrible to the frighted Iſraelites, than the *daily croſs* to thoſe daſtardly followers of the Crucified? What Boanerges can ſpirit them up, and lead them on *from conquering to conquer?* Who can even make them look the enemy in the face! Alas! *in their heart they* are already *gone back to Egypt. Their faces are* but half *Sion-ward.* They give way,—they *draw back*;—O may it not be *to perdition!* May not the King of terrors overtake them in their retreat, and make them as great monuments of God's vengance againſt cowardly ſoldiers, as Lot's wife was of his indignation againſt halting racers!

But ſetting allegory aſide, permit me, Sir, to pour my fears into your boſom, and tell you with the utmoſt plainneſs my diſtreſſing thoughts of the religious world.

For ſome years I have ſuſpected there is more imaginary than *unfeigned faith*, in moſt of thoſe who paſs for believers. With a mixture of indignation and grief have I ſeen them careleſsly follow the ſtream of corrupt nature, againſt which they ſhould have manfully wreſtled: And by the moſt prepoſterous miſtake, when they ſhould have exclaimed againſt their † *Antinomianiſm*, I have heard them cry out againſt "the ‡ *Legality* of their wicked hearts; which, they

† The word *Antinomianiſm* is derived from two Greek words *anti* and *nomos*, which ſignify *againſt* the *law*; and the word *Legal* from the Latin *legalis*, which means *agreeable to the law.*

‡ The *legality* contended for in theſe letters is not a *ſtumbling at Chriſt*, and a *going about to eſtabliſh* our *own righteouſneſs* by faithleſs works: This ſin, which the ſcripture calls *unbelief*, I

they said, still suggested they were to *do something* in order to salvation." Glad was I therefore, when I had attentively considered Mr. W.'s Minutes, to find they were leveled at the very errors, which gave rise to an evil I had long lamented in secret, but had wanted courage to resist and attack.

I.

This evil is † *Antinomianism*; that is, any kind of doctrinal or practical *opposition to God's law*, which is the perfect rule of right, and the moral picture of the God of love, drawn in miniature by our Lord in these two exquisite precepts, *Thou shalt love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.*

As *the law is good if a man use it lawfully*, so † legality is excellent if it is evangelical. The external respect shewn by pharisees to the law, is but feigned and hypocritical legality. Pharisees are no more truly legal than Antinomians are truly evangelical. *Had ye believed Moses*, says Jesus to people of that stamp *ye would have believed me*: but in your heart you hate his law, as much as you do my gospel.

We see no less gospel in the preface of the ten commandments, *I am the Lord thy God*, &c. than we do legality in the middle of our Lord's Sermon on the mount, *I say whoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery in his heart.* Nevertheless the latter *has in all things the pre-eminence* over the former, for if *the law* thereby prefaced by the gospel *came by Moses*; *Grace*, the

would no more countenance than murder. The evangelical legality I want to see all in love with, is a cleaving to Christ by a faith which *works righteousness*; a *following him* as he *went about doing good*; and a shewing by St. James's *works* that we have St. Paul's faith.

† See the note on this word in the preceding page.

gracious

gracious, the full display of the gospel, *and Truth*, the true explanation and fulfilling of the law, *came by Jesus Christ*.

That evangelical law should appear to us *sweeter than the honey-comb* and *more precious than fine gold*. We should continually spread the tables of our hearts before our heavenly Law-giver, beseeching him to write it there with his own finger, the powerful Spirit of life and love: But alas! God's commandments are disregarded; they are represented as the needless or impractical sanctions of that superannuated legalist, *Moses;* and if we express our veneration for them, we are looked upon as people who are always strangers to the gospel, or are fallen into the Galatian state.

Not so David: he was so great an admirer of God's law, that he declares the godly man *doth meditate therein day and night;* he expresses his transcendent value for it, under the synonymous expressions of *Law, word, statutes, testimonies, precepts* and *commandments*, in almost every verse of the 119th Psalm. And he says of himself, *O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day.*

St. Paul was as evangelically legal as David; for he knew the law is as much contained in the gospel, as the tables of stone, on which the moral law was written, were contained in the ark. He therefore assured the Corinthians, that *though he had all faith*, even that which is most uncommon, and worked the greatest wonders, it would *profit him nothing*, unless it was accompanied by *charity*, unless it *worked by love*, which is *the fulfilling of the law;* the excellency of faith arising from the excellent end it answers in producing and nourishing love.

Should it be objected, that St. Paul says to the Galatians, *I through the law am dead to the law that I might live to God*, and to the Romans, *Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ:* I answer; In the Apostle's days that expression *the Law* frequently meant the whole Mosaic dispensation; and in that sense every believer is dead to it, dead

to all that *Christ* has not adopted. For, (1.) he is dead to the *Levitical Law, Christ having abolished in himself the law of ordinances, Touch not, taste not, handle not.* (2.) He is dead to the *ceremonial* Law, which was only *a shadow of good things to come*, a typical representation of Christ and the blessings flowing from his sacrifice. (3.) He is dead to the *curse* attending his past violations of the *moral* law, for *Christ hath delivered us from the* CURSE *of the law, being made a curse for us.* And lastly, he is dead to the hopes of recommending himself to God, by the *merit* of his obedience of the moral law; for in point of *merit*, he *is determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified.*

To make St. Paul mean more than this, is (1.) To make him maintain that no believer can sin; for if *sin is the transgression of the law*, and "the law is dead and buried," it is plain no believer can sin, as no body can transgress a law which is abolished; for *where no law is, there is no transgression.* (2.) It is to make him contradict St. James who exhorts us to *fulfil the royal* LAW *according to the scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* And (3.) It is to make him contradict himself: for he charges the Galatians *by love to serve one another, all the law being fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:* And he assures the Hebrews that under the new *covenant*, believers, far from being *without* God's *Laws*, have *them written in their hearts; God* himself *places them in their mind.* We cannot therefore with any shadow of justice put Dr. Crisp's coat upon the Apostle and press him into the service of the Antinomians.

And did our Lord side with Antinomians? Just the reverse. Far from repealing the two above mentioned royal precepts, he asserts, that *on them hang all the Law and the Prophets;* and had the four gospels been then written, he would no doubt have represented them as subservient to the establishing of the Law, as he did the book of Isaiah, the evangelical Prophet. Such high thoughts had he of the Law, that

that when a Lawyer expreſſed his veneration for it, by declaring that the *love of God and our neighbour was more than all the whole burnt-offerings and ſacrifices: Jeſus ſeeing that he had anſwered diſcreetly, ſaid unto him: thou art not far from the kingdom of God.*

The gospel itſelf terminates in the fulfilling of the commandments: For as the curſe of the law like the ſcourge of a ſevere ſchoolmaſter drives; ſo the goſpel like a loving guide brings us to Chriſt, the great law-fulfiller, in whom we find inexhauſtible treaſures of pardon and power; of pardon for paſt breaches of the law, and of power for preſent obedience to it. Nor are we ſooner come to Him, than he magnifies the law by his precepts, as he formerly did by his obedience unto death. *If ye love me, ſays he, keep my commandments: This is his commandment that we ſhould love one another;* and *he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*

Again, the goſpel diſplays Jeſus's dying love, that *by believing* it *we may* love him: that is, *have everlaſting life*, the life of *love* which *abideth* when the life of faith is no more. Hence St. John ſums up chriſtianity in theſe words, *We love him becauſe he firſt loved us;* and what is it to love Jeſus, but to fulfil the whole law at once, to love God and man, the Creator and the Creature, united in one divinely human perſon!

Did the Son of God *magnify the Law* that we might vilify it? Did he *make it honourable* that we might make it contemptible? Did he *come to fulfil it* that we might be diſcharged from fulfilling it according to our capacity? that is, diſcharged from loving God and our neighbour? diſcharged from the employment and joys of heaven? No: the *Word was* never *made fleſh* for this dreadful end. None but Satan could have become incarnate to go upon ſuch an infernal errand as this. Standing therefore upon the rock of evangelical truth, we aſk with St. Paul, *Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Nay, we eſtabliſh the law.* We point ſinners to that Saviour, in and from whom they

may

may continually have the law-fulfilling power, *that the righteouſneſs of the Law may be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the fleſh but after the Spirit.*

Such are the glorious and delightful views, which the Scriptures gives us of the Law diſarmed of its curſe in Chriſt the Law of holy, humble love, ſo ſtrongly inforced in the diſcourſes, and ſweetly exemplified in the life and death of the *Prophet like unto Moſes!*—So amiable, ſo precious is the book of the law, when delivered to us by Jeſus, ſprinkled with his atoning blood, and explained by his loving Spirit! And ſo true is St. Paul's aſſertion, *We are not without law to God but under the law to Chriſt!*

Inſtead then of dreſſing up the Law as a ſcarecrow, let us in our degree *magnify it, and make it honourable* as did our Lord. Inſtead of repreſenting it as "an intolerable yoke of bondage," let us call it with St. Paul *the law of Chriſt*, and with St. James *the perfect law of* LIBERTY. And let every true believer ſay with David, *I love thy commandments above gold and precious ſtones: I ſhall always keep thy law, yea for ever and ever: I will walk at* LIBERTY *for I ſeek thy precepts.*

But alas! how few give us theſe evangelical views of the law, and practical views of the goſpel! How many intimate Chriſt has *fulfilled all righteouſneſs*, that we might be the children of God with hearts *full of unrighteouſneſs!* If ſome inſiſt upon our *fulfilling all righteouſneſs* alſo, is it not chiefly when they want to draw us into their peculiarities, and *dip* us into their narrow denomination? And what number, under the fair pretence that they "have a living law *written in their hearts*," inſinuate, "there is no need of preaching the law" to them either to ſhew them more of God's purity, indear the atoning blood, regulate their conduct, or convince them of the neceſſity of *perfecting holineſs!*

But ſuppoſe theſe Objectors have as they ſay, the *law written in their inward parts*, (which the actions

actions and tempers of ſome make rather doubtful,) is the writing ſo *perfectly finiſhed*, that no one ſtroke needs be added to it? Is not the law an important part of *the word of righteouſneſs?* And could not the Holy Ghoſt re-touch the writing, or deepen the engraving, by the miniſtry of *the word of righteouſneſs?* Again, if the internal teachings of the holy ſpirit ſuperſede the *letter* of the *law*, muſt they not by the ſame reaſon ſuperſede the *letter* of the *goſpel?* Is there any more need of *preaching* the goſpel than the law to believers? Or have they not the goſpel *written in their hearts*, as well as the law?

At what amazing heights of unſcriptural perfection muſt our Objectors ſuppoſe themſelves! What palpaple errors do they run into, that they may have the honour of paſſing for evangelical! And who will envy them the glory of countenancing the antinomian deluſion, by ſtanding in direct oppoſition to Chriſt, who thus decides the controverſy: *Think not that I am come to deſtroy the Law and the Prophets: I am not come to deſtroy but to fulfil. For verily I ſay unto you, Till heaven and earth paſs away, one jot or tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the law, till all be fulfilled*, either in what it requires or denounces: for the law is *fulfilled* not only when its precepts are obeyed, but when rewards are given to the obſervers, and puniſhments inflicted upon the violators, of it. *Whoſoever therefore ſhall* DO *my commandments, and* TEACH *them, ſhall be great in the kingdom of heaven.*

Do not imagine, Rev. Sir, I thus cry up God's Law, to drown the late cries of *hereſy* and *apoſtacy*. I appeal to matter of fact and your own obſervations. Conſider the religious world, and ſay, if ANTINOMIANISM is not in general a motto better adapted to the ſtate of profeſſing Congregations, Societies, Families, and Individuals, than *Holineſs unto the Lord*, the inſcription that ſhould be even upon our *horſes bells*.

II.

II.

Begin with *Congregations*, and caſt firſt your eyes upon the *Hearers*. In general they have curious *itching ears*, and *will not endure ſound doctrine*. Many of them are armed with *the breaſtplate of a righteouſneſs* which they have vainly † imputed to themſelves: they have on the ſhowy *helmet of* a preſumptuous *hope*, and hold faſt the impenetrable ſhield of ſtrong prejudice. With theſe they *quench the fiery darts* of convincing Truth, and ſtand undaunted under vollies of reproof.

They ſay, they "will have nothing but Chriſt:" And who could blame them, if they would have Chriſt in all his offices? Chriſt with all his parables and ſermons, cautions and precepts, reproofs and expoſtulations, exhortations and threatnings? Chriſt preaching to the multitudes upon a mountain, as well as honourably teaching in the temple? Chriſt faſting in the wilderneſs, or praying in Gethſemane; as well as Chriſt making the multitudes

† Our imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs to ourſelves is a trick of our antinomian hearts, and is a dreadful deluſion: but God's imputing of Chriſt's righteouſneſs to true believers is a moſt bleſſed *reality*, for which we cannot too much contend. *He ſpeaks the word and it is done*; his imputation is not an *idea*, but a fiat: wherever it takes place, *Jehovah our righteouſneſs*, or *Chriſt the righteous dwells in the heart by faith*. I wiſh that with reſpect to *imputed righteouſneſs*, we paid more regard to the late Mr. Hart's ſentiment. This experienced and *ſound* Calviniſt, in the account of his converſion prefixed to his hymns, ſays, with great truth: "As much as Lazarus coming out of the grave, and feeling himſelf reſtored to life, differed from thoſe who only ſaw the miracle, or believed the fact told them; ſo great is the difference between a ſoul's *real* coming to Chriſt out of himſelf, and having the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to him by the precious faith of God's elect; and a man's bare believing the doctrine of imputed righteouſneſs, becauſe he ſees it contained in the ſcripture, or aſſenting to the truth of it there propoſed to his underſtanding by others."

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ſit down upon the graſs to receive *loaves and fiſhes*, or promiſing *thrones* to his diſciples? Chriſt *conſtraining them to get into a ſhip*, and *toil in rowing all night with contrary wind*; as well as Chriſt *coming in the morning*, and cauſing *the ſhip to be immediately at the land whether they went?* Chriſt upon mount Calvary as well as Chriſt upon mount Tabor? In a word, Who would find fault with them, if they would have Chriſt with his poverty and ſelf-denial, his reproach and croſs, his ſpirit and graces, his prophets and apoſtles, his plain apparel and mean followers?

But alas! It is not ſo. They will have *what* they pleaſe of Chriſt, and that too *as* they pleaſe. If he comes accompanied by legal Moſes and honeſt Elijah, who talk of the crucifixion of the body and *deceaſe* of the fleſh, they can do very well without him. If he preaches free grace, free will, faithfulneſs, or heavenly-mindedneſs, ſome turn to the right, ſome wheel about to the left, others go directly back, and all agree to ſay or think, *This is an hard ſaying, who can hear it?*

They admire him in one chapter, and know not what to make of him in another. Some of his words they extol to the ſky, and others they ſeem to be aſhamed of. If he aſſerts his authority as a Lawgiver, they are ready to treat him with as little ceremony as they do Moſes. If he ſays, *Keep my commandments, I am a King:* like the Jews of old they riſe againſt the awful declaration; or they *crown him* as a *ſurety*, the better to *ſet him at nought* as a *monarch*. And if he adds to his miniſters, I am *the Prophet that was to come, go in my name and* TEACH ALL *nations to* OBSERVE ALL THINGS *whatſoever I have* COMMANDED *you*; they complain, "This is *the law*; give us *the goſpel*, we can reliſh nothing but *the goſpel*."

They have no idea of *eating the paſchal lamb* whole, *his head with his legs, and the purtenance thereof*; nor do they take care of *not breaking his bones:* They do not like him *roaſt with fire* neither;

ther; but *raw* or *ſodden with water* out of their own *broken ciſterns:* If you preſent him to them as the type of the *Lamb of God that taketh away the ſin of the world*, and *maketh an end of it*; their hearts heave, they ſay, *Pray have me excuſed* from thus feeding upon him; and though it is ſaid, *Ye ſhall let nothing of it remain until the morning, you ſhall eat it in haſte*, they poſtpone, they beg leave to keep it till the article of death: And if in the mean time you talk to them of *bitter herbs*, they marvel at your Jewiſh legal taſte, and complain that you ſpoil the goſpel feaſt.

They do not conſider we muſt *give every one his portion of meat*, or proper medicine *in due ſeaſon*; and that ſweet things are not always wholeſome. They forget we muſt *leave all* antinomian refinements *to follow Chriſt*, who ſometimes ſays to decent phariſees, *How can you eſcape the damnation of hell.* And to a beloved diſciple that ſhuns the croſs, *Satan! thou favoureſt not the things of God, but the things of men.* They will have nothing but the atonement. Nor do they chuſe to remember that St. Paul, who *did not ſhun to declare the whole counſel of God*, preaching Chriſt to Felix by *reaſoning of temperance, righteouſneſs, and judgment to come.*

Hence it is that ſome preachers muſt chuſe comfortable ſubjects to pleaſe their hearers; juſt as thoſe who make an entertainment for nice perſons, are obliged to ſtudy what will ſuit their difficult taſte. A multitude of important ſcriptures can be produced, on which no miniſter, who is unwilling to loſe his reputation as an evangelical preacher, muſt dare to ſpeak in ſome pulpits, unleſs it is to explain away or enervate their meaning. Take ſome inſtances.

The good old Calviniſts (Archbiſhop Leighton for one) queſtioned whether a man was truly converted who did not ſincerely *go on to perfection*, and heartily endeavour to *perfect holineſs in the fear of God:* but now if we only quote ſuch paſſages with an emphaſis, and inforce their meaning with ſome

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degree of earneſtneſs, the truth of our converſion is ſuſpected: We even paſs for enemies to Chriſt's righteouſneſs.

If we have courage to handle ſuch ſcriptures as theſe, *To do good and to diſtribute forget not, for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed.—Shew me thy faith by thy works—Was not Rahab juſtified by works? By works was Abraham's faith made perfect*, &c. The bare giving out of our text prejudices our Antinomian hearers againſt us, and robs us of their candid attention; unleſs they expect a Charity-Sermon: For on ſuch an occaſion they will yet allow us, at the cloſe of our diſcourſe, to ſpeak honorably of good works: juſt as thoſe who runs to the oppoſite extreme, will yet, on ſome particular days, ſuch as Chriſtmas and Good-Friday, permit us to make honorable mention of Jeſus Chriſt.

The evil would be tolerable, if we were only obliged to ſelect ſmooth texts in order to gratify an Antinomian audience; but alas! it is grown ſo deſperate, that unleſs we *adulterate the ſincere milk of the word*, many reject it as poiſon. It is a doubt whether we could preach in ſome celebrated pulpits on *the good man*, who *is merciful and lendeth*, who *hath diſperſed abroad and given to the poor*, and *whoſe righteouſneſs remaineth for ever*,—or on *breaking off our ſins by righteouſneſs, and our iniquities by ſhewing mercy to the poor*,—or on *the righteouſneſs which exceeds the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees*,—or on *the robes waſhed and made white in the blood of the Lamb*, without giving general diſguſt; unleſs, to keep in the good grace of our Nicolaitan hearers, we were to diſſent from all ſober commentators, and offer the greateſt violence to the context, our own conſcience, and common ſenſe, by ſaying that the *righteouſneſs* and *robes* mentioned in thoſe paſſages, are Chriſt's imputed, and not our performed obedience.

How few of our evangelical congregations would bear from the pulpit an honeſt explanation of what they allow us to read in the deſk! We may open

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our ſervice by ſaying, that *When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedneſs, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive:* but woe to us, if we handle the ſcripture in the pulpit, unleſs we wreſt it by repreſenting Chriſt as *the wicked man* who DOES *that which is lawful and right, to ſave our ſouls alive,* without any of our DOINGS.

Were we to preach upon theſe words of our Lord, *This* DO *and thou ſhalt live,* Luke x. 25; the ſenſe of which is fixed by the 37th Ps. *Go and* DO *thou likewiſe;* or only to handle without deceit thoſe common words of the Lord's prayer, confirmed by a plain parable, *Forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us;* our reputation as Proteſtants would be in as much danger from the bulk of ſome congregations, as our perſons from the fire of a whole regiment in the day of battle. How would ſuch a diſcourſe, and the *poor, blind man* that preached it, be privately exclaimed againſt; or publickly * expoſed in a *Magazine* preſented to the world under the ſacred name of *Goſpel!*

In ſhort, whoever has courage enough to preach as St. Paul did at Athens, at Lyſtra, and before Felix, rebuking ſin without reſpect of perſons: whoever will imitate St. Peter, and *exhort* all his hearers to SAVE THEMSELVES *from this perverſe generation,* aſſuring them that *the promiſe of the Holy Spirit is unto* THEM, *and their* CHILDREN; muſt expect to be looked upon as unſound, if not as an enemy to free-grace, and a ſetter forth of Pelagian or Popiſh doctrines. Moderate Calviniſts themſelves muſt run the gauntlet, if they preach *free-grace* like St. Peter. A pious clergyman, noted for his ſtrong attachment to what ſome call *the doctrines of grace,* was, to my knowledge, highly blamed by one part of his auditory, for having preached to the other *repentance towards God,* and exhorted them to call on him for mercy: And I remember he juſt ſaved his ſinking

* This was actually the caſe ſome months ago, with reſpect to a ſermon preached by Mr. Weſley.

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reputation as a *found* divine, by pleading, that two Apoſtles exhorted even Simon Magus to *repent of his wickedneſs, and pray to God, if perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven him.*

When ſuch profeſſors will not bear the plaineſt truth, from miniſters whoſe ſentiments agree with theirs; how will they riſe againſt deeper truths advanced by thoſe who are of a different opinion! Some will even loſe all decency. Obſerving, in preaching laſt ſummer, one of them remarkably buſy in diſturbing all around him, when the ſervice was over I went up to him, and enquired into the cauſe of the diſſatisfaction he had ſo indecently expreſſed. "I am not afraid to tell it to your face ſaid he; I do not like your doctrine: You are a free-willer." If I have ſpoken evil, replied I, bear witneſs of the evil. He pauſed a while, and then charged me with praying before the ſermon, as if *all* might be ſaved. "That is falſe doctrine, added he, and if Chriſt himſelf came down from heaven to preach it, I would not believe him."

I wondered at firſt at the poſitiveneſs of my rigid objector; but upon ſecond thoughts, I thought him modeſt, in compariſon of thoſe numbers of profeſſors, who ſee that Chriſt actually came down from heaven, and preached the doctrine of perfection in his ſermon upon the mount, and yet will face us down that it is an Anti-Chriſtian doctrine.

This Antinomian cavilling of hearers againſt preachers is deplorable; and the effects of it will be dreadful. If the Lord does not put a ſtop to this growing evil, we ſhall ſoon ſee every where, what we ſee in too many places; ſelf-conceited, unhumbled men, riſing againſt the truths and miniſters of God,—men who *are not* meek *doers of the law, but* inſolent *judges*, prepoſterouſly trying the law by which they ſhall ſoon be tried—men, who inſtead of ſitting as criminals before all the meſſengers of their Judge, with arrogancy invade the Judge's tribunal, and arraign even his moſt venerable

rable ambaſſadors—men who ſhould *fall on their faces before all*, and *give glory to God*, by *confeſſing that He is with* his miniſters of every denomination *of a truth*; but who, far from doing it, boldly condemn the word that condemns them, ſnatch the two edge ſword from the mouth of every faithful meſſenger, blunt the edge of it, and audaciouſly thruſt at him in their turn—men who, when they ſee a ſervant of God in the pulpit, ſuppoſe he ſtands at their bar; try him with as much inſolence as Corah, Dathan and Abiram tried Moſes; caſt him with leſs kindneſs than Pilate did Jeſus; force a fool's coat of their own making upon him; and then, from *the ſeat of the ſcornful*, pronounce the deciſive ſentence: "He is legal, dark, blind, unconverted; an enemy to free-grace:—He is a rank Papiſt, a Jeſuit, a falſe Prophet, or a wolf in ſheep's clothing."

III.

But whence ſprings this almoſt general antinomianiſm of our congregations? Shall I conceal the ſore becauſe it feſters in my own breaſt? Shall I be partial? No, in the name of Him who is *no reſpecter of perſons*, I will confeſs my ſin, and that of many of my brethren. Though I am the leaſt, and (I write it with tears of ſhame) the moſt unworthy of them all, I will follow the dictates of my conſcience, and uſe the authority of a Miniſter of Chriſt. If Balaam, a *falſe* Prophet, took in good part the reproof of his aſs, I ſhould wrong my honored Brethren and Fathers, the *true* Prophets of the Lord, if I feared their reſenting ſome well-meant reproofs, which I firſt level at myſelf, and for which I heartily wiſh there was no occaſion.

Is not the antinomianiſm of hearers fomented by that of preachers? Does it not become us to take the

the greateſt part of the blame upon ourſelves, according to the old adage, "Like prieſt, like people?" Is it ſurpriſing that ſome of us ſhould have an antinomian audience? Do we not make or keep it ſo? When did we preach ſuch a practical ſermon as that of our Lord on the mount, or write ſuch cloſe letters as the Epiſtles of St. John? Alas! I doubt it is but ſeldom. Not living ſo near to God ourſelves as we ſhould, we are afraid to come near to the conſciences of our people. The Jews ſaid to our Lord, *in ſo ſaying thou reproacheſt us*; but now the caſe is altered; and our auditors might ſay to many of us, "In ſo ſaying you would reproach yourſelves."

Some prefer popularity to plain-dealing. We love to ſee a croud of worldly-minded hearers rather than a *little flock, a peculiar people zealous of good works.* We dare not ſhake our congregations to purpoſe, leſt our *five thouſand* ſhould in three years time be reduced to *an hundred and twenty.*

Luther's advice to Melancthon, *Scandaliza fortiter*, "So preach that thoſe who do not fall out with their ſins, may fall out with thee," is more and more unfaſhionable. Under pretence of drawing our hearers by love, ſome of us ſoftly rock the cradle of carnal ſecurity in which they ſleep. For "fear of grieving the dear children of God," we let *buyers and ſellers, ſheep and oxen*, yea goats and lions, fill the *temple* undiſturbed. And becauſe, "the bread muſt not be kept from the hungry children," we let thoſe who are *wanton* make ſhameful waſte of it, and even allow *dogs* which we ſhould *beware of*, and noiſy parrots that can ſpeak *ſhibboleth*, to do the ſame. We forget that *God's children are led by his Spirit*, who is the *Comforter* himſelf: that they are all afraid of being deceived, all *jealous for the Lord of hoſts*; and therefore prefer a preacher who *ſearches Jeruſalem with candles*, and cannot ſuffer *God's houſe to be made a den of thieves* to a workman who *white-waſhes* the noiſome *ſepulchres*

he ſhould open; and *daubs* over *with untempered morter the* bulging *walls* he ſhould demoliſh.

The old Puritans ſtrongly inſiſted upon *perſonal holineſs*, and the firſt Methodiſts upon the *new birth*; but theſe doctrines ſeem to grow out of date. The goſpel is caſt into another mould. People it ſeems may now be *in Chriſt* without being *new creatures*, or new creatures without caſting *old things* away. They may be God's children without God's image; and *born of the Spirit* without *the fruits of the Spirit*. If our unregenerate hearers get orthodox ideas about the way of ſalvation in their heads, evangelical phraſes concerning Jeſus's love in their mouths, and a warm zeal for our party and favourite forms in their hearts; without any more ado we help them to rank themſelves among the children of God. But alas! this ſelf-adoption into the family of Chriſt will no more paſs in heaven, than ſelf-imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs. The work of the ſpirit will ſtand there, and that alone. Again.

Some of us often give our congregations particular accounts of *the covenant* between the perſons of the bleſſed Trinity, and ſpeak of it as confidently as if the King of kings had admitted us members of his privy counſel; but how ſeldom do we do juſtice to the ſcriptures where the covenant is mentioned in a *practical* manner! How rarely do the miniſters who are fond of preaching upon the Covenant between God and David, dwell upon ſuch ſcriptures as theſe! *Becauſe they continued not in my covenant I regarded them not; becauſe they have tranſgreſſed the Law, changing the Ordinances, and broken the Everlaſting Covenant, therefore hath the curſe devoured the Earth, and they that dwell therein are deſolate; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. I ſay to the wicked what haſt thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth?* —— *They kept not the covenant of God and refuſed to walk in his law*; they would not be evangelically legal, *therefore*

therefore a fire was kindled in Jacob, the wrath of God came upon them, he slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen, the elect *of Israel!*

We frequently keep back from our hearers the very portions that honest Nathan, or blunt John the Baptist would have particularly inforced. The taste of many is perverted, they *loath the manna* of the word, not because it is *light*, but *heavy* food: They must have *savory meat, such as their soul loveth*; and we *hunt for venison*, we minister to their spiritual luxury, and feast with them on our own doctrinal refinements. Hence *many are weak and sickly among* us? Some that might be *fat and well-liking, cry out, My leanness! my leanness!* And *many sleep* in a spiritual grave, the easy prey of corruption and sin.

How few Calebs, how few Joshuas are found among the many spies who bring a report of the good land! The cry is seldom, *Let us go up and possess it*, unless the good land be the map of the gospel drawn by Dr. Crisp. On the contrary, the difficulties attending the noble conquest are magnified to the highest degree: *The sons of Anak are tall and strong, and their cities fenced up to heaven.* "All our corruptions are gigantic, the castle where they dwell shall always remain a den of thieves; it is an impregnable citadel, strongly garrisoned by Apollyon's forces; we shall never love God here with our souls, we shall always have *desperately wicked hearts.*"

How few of our celebrated pulpits are there, where more has not been said *at times* for sin than against it! With what an air of positiveness and assurance has that Barabbas, that murderer of Christ and souls been pleaded for! "It will humble us, make us watchful, stir up our diligence, quicken our graces, endear Christ," &c. that is in plain English, pride will beget humility, sloth will spur us on to diligence, rust will brighten our armour, and unbelief, the very soul of every sinful temper, is to do the work of faith! Sin must

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not only be always lurking about the walls and gates of the town of Man's soul (if I may once more allude to Bunyan's holy war) but it shall dwell in it, in the King's palace, *in the inner chamber*, the inmost recesses of the heart: There is no turning it out. Jesus who cleansed the lepers with a word or a touch, cannot, with all the force of his spirit and virtue of his blood, expel this leprosy: it is too inveterate. Death, that foul monster, the offspring of Sin, shall have the important honor of killing his father. He, he alone is to give the great, the last, the decisive blow. This is confidently asserted by those who cry, Nothing but Christ! They allow him to lop off the branches; but Death, the great Saviour Death, is to destroy the root of sin. In the mean time *the temple of God* shall have *agreement with idols*, and *Christ concord with Belial: The Lamb* of God *shall lie down with the* roaring *Lion* in our heart.

Nor does the preaching of this internal slavery; this bondage of spiritual corruption, shock our hearers. No: this mixture of light and darkness passes for gospel in our days. And, what is more astonishing still, by making much ado about "*finished* salvation," we can even put it of as "the only pure, genuine and comfortable gospel." While the smoothness of our doctrine will atone for our most glaring inconsistencies.

We have so whetted the antinomian appetite of our hearers, that they swallow down almost any thing. We may tell them, St. Paul was at one and the same time *carnal, sold under sin*, crying, *Who shall deliver me from this body of death?* and triumphing that he *did not walk after the flesh but after the spirit, rejoicing in the testimony of a good conscience*, and glorying that *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him free from the law of sin and death!* This suits their experience; therefore they readily take *our* word, and it passes for *the word of God*. It is a mercy that we have not yet attempted to prove by the same argument, that

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lying and *curſing* are quite conſiſtent with apoſtolic faith; for St. Paul ſpeaks of *his lie*, and St. James ſays, *with our tongues curſe we men*.

We may make them believe, that though adultery and murder are damning ſins in poor blind Turks and Heathens, yet they are only *the ſpots of God's children* in enlightened Jews and favoured Chriſtians.——That God is the moſt partial of all judges, ſome being accurſed to the pit of hell for breaking the law in the moſt trifling points; while others, who actually break it in the moſt flagrant inſtances, are richly *bleſſed with all heavenly benedictions*.——And that while God beholds no iniquity in Jacob, no perverſeneſs in Iſrael, he ſees nothing but odious ſins in Iſmael, and deviliſh wickedneſs in Eſau: Although the Lord aſſures us *the wickedneſs of the wicked ſhall be upon him*, and that *though hand join in hand the wicked ſhall not go unpuniſhed*, were he as great in *Jacob* as Corah, and as famous as Zimri in *Iſrael*.

We may tell our hearers one hour, that "the love of Chriſt ſweetly *conſtrains* all believers to walk, yea to run the way of God's commandments, and that they cannot help obeying its forcible dictates:" And we may perſuade them the next hour, that "how to perform what is good they find not, that they fall continually into ſin; for that which they do they allow not, and what they would that do they not; but what they hate that do they." And that theſe inconſiſtencies may not ſhock their common ſenſe, or alarm their conſciences, we again touch the ſweet-ſounding ſtring of *finiſhed* ſalvation: we intimate we have the key of evangelical knowledge, reflect on thoſe who expect deliverance from ſin in this life, and *build* up our congregations in a moſt comfortable, I wiſh I could ſay, *moſt holy faith*.

In ſhort, we have ſo uſed our people to ſtrange doctrines, and prepoſterous aſſertions, that if we were to intimate, God himſelf ſets us a pattern of antinomianiſm, by diſregarding his own moſt holy

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and lovely law which inculcates perfect love—if we were even to hint that he bears a secret grudge, or an immortal enmity to those very souls whom he commands us to *love as Christ hast loved us;* that he feeds them only for the great day of slaughter, and has determined (so inveterate is his hatred!) *before the foundation of the world,* to *fit* them as *vessels of wrath,* that he might eternally fill them with his fiery vengeance, merely to shew what a great and sovereign God he is; I doubt not whether some would not be highly pleased and say, we had "preached a sound and sweet discourse." This would probably be the case if we addressed them in such a manner as to make them believe they are *elect:* not indeed of those ancient, legal, and wrestling *elect who cry to God day and night to be avenged of their spiritual adversary;* but of those modern, indolent elect, who have found out a short way to heaven, and maintain, "we are absolutely to do nothing in order to salvation."

With joy I confess however, that glorious and rousing truths are frequently delivered in the demonstration of the spirit and of power. But alas! the blow is seldom followed. You have seen fond mothers violently correcting their children one instant, and the next dandling them upon their knees; and by foolishly kissing away their tears, spoiling the correction they had given. Just so it is with several of us: We preach a close discourse, and seem determined to drive the buyers and sellers out of the temple. Our antinomian hearers begin to awake and look about them: Some are even ready to cry out, *Men and brethren what shall we do?* But alas! we sound a retreat when we should shout for a second battle: By an unaccountable weakness, before we conclude, we sooth them up, and make a way for their escape; or, which is not much better, the next time we preach, by setting up Dr. Crisp's doctrine as much as ever, we industriously repair the breach we had made in the antinomian Babel.

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And suppose some of us preach against Antinomianism, is not our practice contrary to our preaching? We are under a dangerous mistake, if we think ourselves clear from antinomianism, merely because we thunder against antinomian principles: For as some, who zealously maintain such principles, by the happiest inconsistency in the world, pay nevertheless in their practice a proper regard to the law they revile; so not a few, who profess the deepest respect for it, are so unhappily inconsistent, as to transgress it without ceremony. The God of holiness says, *Go and* WORK *in my vineyard.* The inconsistent Antinomian answers, "I will not be bound by any *Law:* I scorn the ties of *Duty:*" but nevertheless *he repents and goes.* The inconsistent legalist replies, "It is my bounden *duty* to obey, *I go* Lord," nevertheless *he does not go.* Which of the two is the greater antinomian? The latter no doubt: his practical antinomianism is much more odious to God and man, than the speculative error in the former.

The Lord God help us to avoid both! Whether the hellish wolf come barefaced, or *in sheep's cloathing;* or what is a still more dangerous disguise, *in* LAMB's *cloathing;* in the clothes of the shepherd, covered from head to foot with a righteousness which he had *imputed* to himself, and sing the Syren song of *finished* salvation.

IV.

I shall close these reflexions upon the antinomianism of preachers by presenting you with sketches of two very opposite ways of preaching. The first is an extract from Bishop Hopkins's 24th sermon, intitled *Practical Christianity;* upon those words of St. Paul, *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling,* &c. This testimony will weigh so much

much the more with you as he was a *found Calviniſt*, and a truly converted man.

"To *work out our Salvation*, Says the godly prelate, is to perſevere in the ways of obedience until through them, that ſalvation that is begun here on earth be perfected in heaven. This *work* implies three things. (1.) Pains and labour. *Salvation* is that which muſt be wrought out; it is that which will make the ſoul pant and breathe, yea run down with ſweat to obtain it. (2.) It implies conſtancy and diligence. A Chriſtian that would *work out his ſalvation*, muſt be always employed about it. It is a web, into which we muſt weave the whole thread of our lives. That man who works at ſalvation only by ſome paſſionate fits, and then within a while undoes it all again by foul apoſtacy, and notorious ſins, will never *work ſalvation* OUT. (3.) It promiſes ſucceſs; though it be hard work, it ſhall not be long work; continue working, it ſhall be wrought out! what before was your work, ſhall be your reward; and this ſalvation that was ſo painful in working, ſhall be moſt bleſſed in the enjoyment.

"Say not, "We have no ſtrength to work with." What God commands us to do, he will aſſiſt us in doing. We are impotent, but God is omnipotent: *Work* therefore, for this omnipotent God *works in you both to will and to do.*

"The propoſition I ſhall lay down from the text is this: *That it is the Duty of every true Chriſtian to work out his own* ſalvation *with fear and trembling:* Or *that every Chriſtian nay every man ought to work for his living, even for an eternal life.* To mention places for the proof of this were to tranſcribe the Bible. We can no where open this bleſſed book, but we find this truth proved to us, either directly or by conſequence. And yet it is ſtrange in theſe days to ſee how dubiouſly ſome men, who would be thought admirers of *free-grace*, ſpeak of obedience and working,

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as if they were the badge of a *legal ſpirit*. Oh it is a ſoft and eaſy doctrine to bid men ſit ſtill and believe, as if God would tranſlate them to heaven upon their couches. It is poſſible that theſe notions ſhould be diſperſed and entertained but becauſe it has always been the Devil's policy to vent thoſe doctrines that indulge the fleſh under the patronage of *free grace* and *goſpel attainments?*

"Wherefore is it that we are commanded to *ſtrive that we may enter in at the ſtrait gate?* So *to run that we may obtain?* So to *wreſtle* that we may *be able to ſtand?* So to *fight* that we may *lay hold on eternal life!* Can you *ſtrive* and *run*, and *wreſtle* and *fight*, and all this by doing nothing?—If God would ſave you without working, why has he given you grace, an operative principle, that you might work? He might as well ſave you without grace, as without works: for that is not grace that does not put forth itſelf in working. God, rather than we ſhall not work, will ſet us at work. He gives and promiſes aſſiſtance only that we might work out our own ſalvation. *We are not ſufficient to think any thing:* What then? Muſt we therefore ſit ſtill? No, ſays the Apoſtle, for God who finds us employment, will alſo find us ſtrength: *Our ſufficiency is of God.*

"Wherefore is it that men are juſtly damned? Is it not becauſe they will not do what they are able to do? And whence have they this ability? Is it not from the grace of God's ſpirit?—What is it that men expect? Muſt God drive them to heaven by force and violence whether they will or no?

"If man will, he may work out his ſalvation. I ſpeak not this to aſſert the power of man to work out ſalvation, without the aid of ſpecial grace to incline his will. Where there is ſpecial grace given to make the will willing to convert, there is nothing more required to make him able, be-

cauſe converſion chiefly conſiſts in the act of the will itſelf, only to make him willing is required ſpecial grace; which they that favour the undue liberty of the will do deny. Our impotency lies in the ſtubbornneſs of our will. The greateſt ſinner may work out his own ſalvation if he will. If he is but willing, he has that already that may make him able. God puts no new powers in the ſoul when he converts it!

"Are there any ſo deſperately profane as not to have prayed unto God in their whole life. Why now to what end have you prayed? Was it not for ſalvation? And did you work for ſalvation, and at the ſame time believe you could not work? Thou art inexcuſable O man, whoever thou art that wilt not work, it is in vain to plead thou wanteſt power. God will confute thee out of thy own mouth."

"Would a monſter when he commands his ſervant to work, take this as a ſufficient excuſe for his ſloth and idleneſs, that he has no power to work till God acts and moves him? Why this is a truth, and it may as well be objected by your ſervants to you, as by you unto God. Though it is impoſſible that men ſhould ſtir without God's concurrence, yet this hinders not their endeavour, no, nor is it any matter of diſcouragement to them. They put theſe things to the trial. Now why ſhould we not do ſo in ſpirituals as well as in temporals? Are they not of greater concernment? It is not inability but wilful ſloth that deſtroys men. Sinners, wherefore will you periſh? Why will you ſleep away your ſouls into hell? Is it more painful for you to work than to be damned? Endeavour therefore to do what you can; labour and ſweat at ſalvation's work, rather than fail of it for a wilful neglect. *How ſhall* you *eſcape if* you *neglect ſo great ſalvation?*

"*Obj.* Thus to preſs men to working is derogatory to Chriſt's merits, by which alone we are ſaved,

ſaved, and not by our works. Chriſt has done all for us, and wrote out our ſalvation by himſelf. Shall we piece out his work by our obedience; when all we have now to do is to believe on him?

"*Anſ.* There is the ſweeteſt harmony between the merits of Chriſt, and our *working out of our ſalvation.* To make it evident, I ſhall ſhew what Chriſt has done for us, and what he expects we ſhall do for ourſelves. He has merited grace, and purchaſed eternal happineſs. And why did Chriſt merit grace? Was it not that we might act it in obedience? If he merited grace that we might obey, is it ſenſe to object that our obedience is derogatory to his merit? If one end of his doing all that he did for us, was to enable us to do for ourſelves; will any man ſay, now I am bound to do nothing, becauſe Chriſt has done all? How loſt are ſuch men both to reaſon and religion, who undertake ſo to argue? No, Salvation was purchaſed and Grace procured, that by the acting and exerciſe of that grace, we might attain to that ſalvation. It is not by way of merit or purchaſe that we exhort men to work out their ſalvation. Thoſe are guilty of practical blaſphemy againſt the Prieſtly Office of Chriſt, who think to merit it by their own works.

"As Chriſt has done two things for us, ſo he requires two things from us. (1.) That we ſhould put forth all the ſtrength of nature in labouring after grace: and, (2.) That we ſhould put forth the power of grace in labouring for the ſalvation purchaſed for us. (1.) Let every ſinner know it is his work to repent and return, that he may live. You cannot ſit down and ſay, what need is there of my working? Chriſt has already done all my work for me to my hands. No, Chriſt has done his own work, the work of a *Saviour* and a *Surety*: but he never did the work of a *ſinner*.

"If Christ by *meriting* grace had bestowed it upon thee, and wrought it in thee, then indeed no more would be required of thee to become holy, but to cast back a lazy look at the purchase of Jesus Christ: Then thy sloth would have some pretence not to labour. But this will not do. Our Saviour commands all men *To seek first the kingdom of God*, and the Apostle exhorts Simon Magus to *pray*. Do not therefore cheat your own souls into perdition by lazy notions about Christ's merits. If you sit still expecting till the meriting grace of Christ drop down into your souls, and change your hearts; truly it may be before that time you yourselves may drop down into hell, with your old unchanged hearts.

"(2.) Christ expects that those who have grace, should put forth the utmost power thereof in labouring after the salvation he has purchased for them. He has merited salvation for them, but it is to be obtained by their own labour and industry. Is not what Christ has done sufficient? Must he *repent*, *believe*, and *obey* for them? This is not to make him a Saviour but a drudge. He has done what was fit for a *mediator* to do. He now requires of us what is meet for *sinners* to do; that is, to *repent*, &c. He now bids you *wash and be clean*. Would you have the great Prophet come and strike off your leprosy, and do nothing towards the cure? The way to heaven is made possible, but if you do not walk in the way that leads to it, you may still be as far from heaven as ever. Though Christ's bearing the punishment of the law by death does exempt us from suffering, yet his obeying of the law does not excuse our obedience to the law. Nor is our obedience derogatory to Christ's because it proceeds from other grounds than Christ's did. He obeyed the law as a covenant of works, we only as a rule of righteousness.

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"To conclude upon this point, So work with that earneſtneſs, conſtancy and unwearineſs in well doing, as if thy works alone were able to juſtify and ſave thee: And ſo abſolutely depend and rely upon the alone merits of Chriſt for juſtification and ſalvation, as if thou never hadſt performed one act of obedience in all thy life. This is the right goſpel-frame of obedience, ſo to work as if we were only to be ſaved by our own merits; and withal ſo to reſt on the merits of Chriſt, as if we had never wrought any thing. It is a difficult thing to give to each of theſe its due in our practice: When we work we are too apt to neglect Chriſt; and when we rely on Chriſt, we are too apt to neglect working. But that Chriſtian has got the right art of obedience who can mingle theſe two together; who can with one hand *work the works of God*, and yet at the ſame time lay faſt hold of the merits of Jeſus Chriſt. Let this antinomian principle be for ever rooted out of the minds of men, that our working is derogatory to Chriſt's work. Never more think he has done all your work for you, but labour for that ſalvation which he has purchaſed and merited. Could ever ſuch ſenſeleſs objections prevail with men who have ſeriouſly read this Scripture? *He gave himſelf for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity*, and *purify to himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works.* But truly when ſloth and ignorance meet together, if you tell men what powers their natures, aſſiſted by preventing grace, have to work, and how neceſſary obedience is to ſalvation, they with the ſluggard fold their arms in their boſom doing nothing; telling us theſe doctrines are *Arminianiſm* and flat *Popery*. But deceive not yourſelves; whether this doctrine takes hold on your judgments now I know not; but this I know aſſuredly, it ſhall take hold of your conſcience either here or hereafter; and then it will not ſuffice you to ſay

either that you had no power to do any thing, or that Christ has already done all for you."

This excellent discourse should be in all the houses of professors. It would shame the careless Remonstrants, and shew them how orthodox some Calvinists are in point of works; and it would confound the slothful Calvinists, and make them see how they have left *Practical Christianity* for *Antinomian Crispianity*. For East cannot be farther from West, than the preceding extract of Bishop Hopkin's sermon is from the following propositions, extracted from Dr. Crisp's works, which some make the standard of evangelical preaching. (They are refuted also in *Gospel truth vindication by Mr. Williams*, whose excellent refutation is recommended by 53 Calvinist divines of the last century. And Mr. Wesley's Propositions in the Minutes of the Conference held in 1770, may be looked upon as the ground on which that refutation stands.)

"Must not a believer, an elect, be rekoned to be a sinner while he does sin? No. Though he does sin, yet he is not to be reckoned as a sinner, his sins are reckoned to be taken away from him.——A man does sin against God; God reckons not his sin to be his; he reckons it Christ's, therefore he cannot reckon it his.——There is no condition in the covenant of Grace; man has no tie upon him to perform any thing whatsoever; as a condition that must be observed on his part; and there is not one bond or obligation upon man to the fulfilling of his part of the covenant, or partaking of the benefits of it.——There is no better way to know your portion in Christ, than upon the general tender of the Gospel to conclude absolutely he is yours: say, "my part is as good as any man's:" Set down thy rest here; question it not, but believe it.——Christ belongs to sinners as sinners; and if there be no worse than sinfulness, rebellion and enmity in thee, he belongs to thee, as well

well as to any in the world.——Chriſt does juſtify a perſon before he believes; we do not believe that we may be juſtified, but becauſe we are juſtified. The elect are juſtified from eternity, at Chriſt's death; and the lateſt time is before they are born.——It is a received conceit among perſons, that our obedience is the way to heaven; and though it be not, ſay they, the cauſe of our reign, yet it is the way to the kingdom: but I muſt tell you, all this ſanctification of life is not a jot the way of that juſtified perſon to heaven.—To what purpoſe do we propoſe to ourſelves the gaining of that by our labour and induſtry, that is already become ours before we do one jot?—Muſt they now labour to gain theſe things, as if it were referred to their well or evil walking; that as they ſhall walk ſo they ſhall ſpeed: The Lord does nothing in his people upon conditions. The Lord intends not that by our obedience we ſhall gain ſomething which in caſe of our failing we ſhall miſcarry of.——While you labour to get by duties, you provoke God as much as in you lies.——We muſt work from life and not for life.—There is nothing you can do from whence you ought to expect any gain to yourſelves.——Love to the brethren, univerſal obedience, and all other inherent qualifications are no ſigns by which we ſhould judge of our ſtate.——Every elect veſſel, from the firſt inſtant of his being, is as pure in the eyes of God from the charge of ſin, as he ſhall be in glory.—— Though ſuch perſons do act rebellion, yet the loathſomeneſs and hatefulneſs of this rebellion is laid on the back of Chriſt; he bears the ſin, as well as the blame, and ſhame: And God can dwell with perſons that act the thing, becauſe all the filthineſs of it is tranſlated from them upon the back of Chriſt.——It is the voice of a lying ſpirit in your hearts that ſays, you that are believers (as David) have yet ſin waſting your conſcience. David indeed ſays, *my ſins are gone over my head*, but

but he ſpeaks from himſelf, and all that he ſpeaks from himſelf was not truth.——There is as much ground to be confident of the pardon of ſin to a believer, as ſoon as he committed it, as to believe it after he has performed all the humiliation in the world: A believer may be aſſured of pardon as ſoon as he commits any ſin, even adultery and murder.— There is not one fit of ſadneſs in a believer but he is out of the way of Chriſt —God does no longer ſtand diſpleaſed though a believer do ſin often.— There is no ſin that ever believers commit, that can poſſibly do them any hurt. Therefore, as their ſins cannot hurt them, ſo there is no cauſe of fear in their ſins committed.—Sins are but ſcare-crows and bug-bears to fright ignorant children, but men of underſtanding ſee they are counterfeit things.— Sin is dead, and there is no more terror in it than in a dead lion.—If we tell believers except they walk thus and thus holily, and do theſe and theſe good works, God will be angry with them, we abuſe the ſcriptures, undo what Chriſt has done, injure unbelievers, and tell God lies to his face.— All our righteouſneſs is filthy, full of menſtruoſity, the higheſt kind of filthineſs—even what is the ſpirit's, muſt be involved within that which is a man's own, under the general notion of *dung*.——God has done every thing in Chriſt, and taken away all things that can diſturb our peace; but man will be mincing the truth, and tell you that if you keep cloſe to God, and refrain from ſin God will love you.— Chriſt does all his work for him as well as in him that believes.— If perſons are not united to Chriſt, and do not partake of juſtification before they do believe there will be bringing to life again the covenant of works; you muſt of neceſſity preſs upon yourſelves theſe terms, I muſt do, that I may have life in Chriſt: I muſt believe." Now if there be believing firſt, then there is doing before living.—To what purpoſe do

do we tell men of wrath and damnation? We had as good hold our tongues," &c. &c.

"I do obſerve, ſays my judicious Calviniſt author, the pretence for theſe opinions is, that they exalt *Chriſt* and *free grace*. Under this ſhadow Antinomianiſm ſet up in Germany. This was the great cry in England above fifty years ſince. The Synod of New England expoſe this as one of the ſpeeches of them whom they call Antinomians: *Here is a great ſtir about grace and looking to hearts; but give me Chriſt: I ſeek not for graces, but for Chriſt; I ſeek not for promiſes, but for Chriſt: I ſeek not for ſanctification, but for Chriſt: Tell me not of meditation and duties, but tell me of Chriſt.* Dr. Criſp very often bears upon this point, as if all he ſaid was to advance Chriſt and Grace."

You will perhaps ſay that our goſpel-miniſters are far more guarded than the good Doctor. But I would aſk whether all his ſcheme is not collected, and made to center in the one faſhionable expreſſion of FINISHED SALVATION? Which ſeems to be our *Shibboleth*.

If the *ſalvation* of the elect was *finiſhed* upon the croſs, then was their *juſtification* finiſhed, their *ſanctification* finiſhed, their *glorification* finiſhed: for juſtification, ſanctification and glorification *finiſhed*, are but the various parts of our *finiſhed ſalvation*. If our juſtification is *finiſhed*, there is no need of believing in order to be juſtified. If our ſanctification is *finiſhed*, there is no need of mortifying one ſin, praying for one grace, taking up one croſs, parting with either right eye or right hand, in order to perfect holineſs. Again,

Suppoſe our ſalvation is *finiſhed*, it follows Chriſt has done all, and we are to do nothing. Obedience and good works are no more neceſſary in order to it, than cutting and carrying ſtones are neceſſary to the compleating of Weſtminſter bridge. We are as perfect in Chriſt, as compleatly blameleſs and holy in the midſt of all our ſins, as ever we ſhall

ſhall be in glory. In a word, if ſalvation is *finiſhed*, well ordered in all things and ſure, our ſins cannot take any thing from it, nor our righteouſneſs have any thing to do with it. The little flock of the elect ſhall be ſaved, nay are fully ſaved now, do what they pleaſe; and the multitudes of the reprobates ſhall be damned, do what they can. Give me only the ſmooth ring of *finiſhed ſalvation*, and without offering the leaſt violence to common ſenſe, I ſhall neceſſarily draw every link of Dr. Criſp's antinomian chain.

I have often wondered, how ſo many excellent men can be ſo fond of an expreſſion which is the ſtalking-horſe of every wild ranter. Is it ſcriptural? Which of the Prophets or Apoſtles ever uſed it on earth? Do even *the Spirits of juſt men made perfect* aſcribe *finiſhed* ſalvation to the Lamb? If they did, would not their uncollected duſt, and the ſouls *crying under the alter*, prove their praiſes premature? Will ſalvation be *finiſhed* till *the laſt enemy, death*, is fully overcome by the general reſurrection? Again,

Is the expreſſion of *finiſhed ſalvation* conſiſtent with the analogy of faith? Does it not ſuperſede our Lord's *interceſſion at the right hand of God?* Whether he intercedes for the reprobate or the elect, acts he not a moſt unwiſe part? Is not he giving himſelf a needleſs trouble, whether he intercedes for the *juſtification* of thoſe whom he has himſelf *reprobated*, or for the ſalvation of thoſe whoſe ſalvation is *finiſhed?* Is it right to offer an inſult to our High-Prieſt upon his mediatorial throne, under pretence of honouring him on the croſs? And may not I ſay with judicious Baxter, *See what this overdoing tends to!* See what contempt it pours upon Him who is *the Brightneſs of his Father's glory!*

If that favourite expreſſion is neither ſcriptural, nor agreeeble to the analogy of faith, is it at leaſt *rational?* I doubt it is not. *Finiſhed* ſalvation implies both deliverance from bodily and ſpiritual evils, and a being made fully partaker of heavenly glory,

glory, in body and in soul. But waving the consideration of glory and heaven, and taking the word *salvation* in its negative and lower sense, I ask: Can it be said with any propriety that *bodily* salvation is *finished*, while innumerable pains and diseases surround us, to drag us to the grave, and deliver us to putrefaction? And is *spiritual* salvation finished? Is *the body of sin destroyed?* Do not those very Ministers who preach *finished salvation* with one breath, tell us with the next, "there is *no* deliverance (that is, *no* finished salvation) from sin in this life?"

And what end does that expression answer? I know of none but that of spreading Dr. Crisp's doctrine, and making thousands of deluded souls talk as if the *tower* of their salvation was *finished*, when they have not so much as *counted the cost*; or when they have just laid the foundation.

Therefore, with all due deference to my Brethren and Fathers who preach *finished salvation*, I ask, Would it not be better to drop that doctrine, with all the other dangerous refinements of the honest Doctor, and preach a *finished atonement*, *a present sovereign remedy*, *compleatly prepared* to heal all our spiritual infirmities, assuage all our miseries, and fit us for *finished salvation* in glory? Would not this be as well at least, as to help our patients to compose themselves to sleep upon the pillow of Antinomianism; by making them believe the preparation of the remedy, aud a compleat cure are all one; so that now they have absolutely nothing to do in order to saving health, and (as the Apostles concluded about Lazarus) if they *sleep* they *shall do well?* And should we not, even in speaking of *Redemption*, imitate the judicious Calvinists of the last century, who carefully distinguished between redemption by the *price* of Jesus's blood, and redemption by the *power* of his Spirit. "The former, said they, was finished upon the cross, but, the latter is not so much as begun in thousands;

ſands; even in all that are unborn or unconverted?

V.

To ſpeak the melancholy truth, how few individuals are free from practical Antinomianiſm? Setting aſide their attendance on the miniſtry of the word, where is the material difference between ſeveral of our genteel believers and other people? Do not we ſee the ſumptuous furniture in their apartments, and faſhionable elegance in their dreſs? What ſums of money do they frequently lay out in coſtly ſuperfluities to adorn their perſons, houſes and gardens?

Wiſe heathens, by the help of a little philoſophy, ſaw the impropriety of having any uſeleſs, brittle veſſels about them: they broke them on purpoſe that they might be conſiſtent with the profeſſion they made of *ſeeking wiſdom*. But we, who profeſs to have *found* Chriſt *the wiſdom of God*, purchaſe ſuch veſſels and toys at an high rate, and inſtead of hiding them for ſhame, as Rachel did her Terraphim for fear, we *write our* motto *over againſt the candleſtick of the plaiſter upon the wall*, and any man that fears the God of Daniel may, upon ſtudying the Chineſe characters, make out ANTINOMIANISM.

Our Lord, whoſe garment does not appear to have been cut in the height of the faſhion as it was made without ſeam, informs us that they who wear *ſoft cloathing*, and ſplendid apparel, *are in king's houſes*. But had he lived in our days, he might have found them in God's houſes; in our faſhionable churches or chapels. There you may find people profeſſing to believe the Bible, who ſo conform to this preſent world as to wear gold, pearls and precious

precious ſtones, when no diſtinction of office or ſtate obliges them to it; in direct oppoſition to the words of two Apoſtles: *Let not their adorning be* ſays St. Peter, *that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.*— *Let them adorn themſelves in modeſt apparel,* adds St. Paul, *not with curled hair, or gold, or pearls, or coſtly array.*

Multitudes of profeſſors, far from being convinced of their ſin in this reſpect, ridicule Mr. W. for bearing his teſtimony againſt it. The oppoſition he dares make to that growing branch of vanity, affords matter of pious mirth to a thouſand antinomians. Iſaiah could openly reprove the *haughty daughters of Zion,* who *walked with ſtretched forth necks, wanton eyes, and tinkling feet:* he could expoſe *the bravery of their faſhionable ornaments, their round tires like the moon, their chains, bracelets, headbands, rings,* and *ear-rings:* but ſome of our humble Chriſtian ladies will not bear a reproof from Mr. W. on the head of dreſs. They even laugh at him, as a *pitiful legaliſt*; and yet, O the inconſiſtency of the antinomian ſpirit! They call Iſaiah the *evangelical Prophet!*

Finery is often attended with an expenſive table, at leaſt with ſuch delicacies as our purſe can reach. St. Paul *kept his body under,* and was *in faſtings often;* and our Lord gives us directions about the proper manner of *faſting.* But the Apoſtle did not *know* the eaſy way to heaven taught by Dr. Criſp; and our Lord did not *approve* of it, or he would have ſaved himſelf the trouble of his directions. In general we look upon faſting much, as we do upon penitential flagellation. Both equally raiſe our pity: we leave them both to popiſh devotes. Some of our good old church-people will yet faſt on Good-Friday; but our faſhionable believers begin to caſt away that laſt ſcrape of ſelf-denial. Their faith, which ſhould produce, animate and regulate works of mortification, goes a ſhorter way to work; it explodes them all.

"But perhaps *we wreſtle not with fleſh and blood* becauſe we are entirely taken up with *wreſtling againſt Principalities, Powers, and ſpiritual Wickedneſſes in high places.*"

Alas! I fear this is not the caſe. Few of us know what it is to *cry out of the deep*, to pray and believe, till in the name of Jeſus we force our way beyond fleſh and blood, come within the reach of the internal world, conflict in an agony with the powers of darkneſs, vanquiſh Apollyon in all his attacks, and continue wreſtling till the day of eternity break upon us, and the God of Jacob bleſs us with all ſpiritual benedictions in heavenly places. John Bunyan's pilgrim, the old Puritans, and the firſt Quakers had ſuch engagements, and gained ſuch victories; but they ſoon got over the edge of internal activity, into the ſmooth, eaſy path of Laodicean formality: Moſt of us called Methodiſts have already followed them; and when we are in that ſnare, Satan ſcorns to conflict with us; puny fleſh and blood are more than a match for us. We fall aſleep under their bewitching power, and begin to dream ſtrange dreams: "Our ſalvation is finiſhed, we have got above legality, we live without frames and feelings, we have attained Chriſtian liberty, we are perfect in Chriſt, we have nothing to do, our covenant is ſure," &c. True! But unhappily it is a covenant with the fleſh: Satan, who is too wiſe to break it by rouzing us in the ſpirit, leaves us to our deluſions; and we think ourſelves in the kingdom of God, when we are only in a fool's paradiſe.

At midnight I will riſe and praiſe thee, ſaid once a pious *Jew*; but we pious *Chriſtians*, who enjoy both health and ſtrength, are impriſoned within our bed-curtains, long after the ſun has *called* the diligent *to their labour*. When *the fear of the Lord* was in us *the begining of wiſdom*, we durſt *not ſo confer with fleſh and blood*. We had then a little faith; and ſo far as it went, it ſhewed itſelf by our works. Then we could without heſitation, and

from

from our hearts, pray, Stir up we beſeech Thee, O Lord, the Wills of thy faithful people; that they plenteouſly bringing forth the Fruit of good Works, may by Thee be plenteouſly rewarded, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. (Collect for the laſt Sunday in Trinity.) We believed there was ſome truth in thoſe words of our Lord's: *Except a man forſake all that he hath, deny himſelf, and take up his croſs daily, he cannot be my diſciple. He that will ſave his life ſhall loſe it, and he that will loſe his life for my ſake ſhall find it. If thine eye offend thee pluck it out; It is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, than having two eyes to be caſt into hell fire. Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate; for I ſay unto you that many ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able;* becauſe they will ſeek to enter in at the *wide*, rather than *the ſtrait gate;* the *antinomian* or *phariſaic*, rather than the *evangelically legal* gate of ſalvation. But now, "We know better, ſay ſome of us, we have got over our ſcruples and legality." We can *conform to this preſent world;* cleave to, inſtead of *forſaking all we have* and even graſp what we have not. What a ſtrange way this of *growing in grace and in the knowledge of Chriſt crucified!*

Daniel informs us that he *made his petition three times*, and David that he offered up his *praiſes ſeven times a day.* Once alſo like them we had fixed hours for private prayer and ſelf examination, for reading the ſcriptures and meditating upon them, perhaps upon our knees; but we thought this was legality too, and under the ſpecious pretence of going beyond forms, and learning to *pray always*, we firſt threw away our form, and ſoon after our endeavours to watch unto prayer: Now we ſcarce ever, for any length of time, ſolemnly bend the knee before *our Father who ſees in ſecret.* And inſtead of leaning on Chriſt's boſom in all the means of grace, we take our graceleſs reſt on the boſom of that painted Jezebel *Formality.*

If we are backward in performing that leading work of PIETY, *ſecret prayer;* It is a wonder if in

general we are averſe to every work of MERCY that coſts us ſomething, beſides a little of our ſuperfluous money? And would to God ſome did not even grudge this, when it is preſſed out of their purſe, by the importunate addreſſes of thoſe who beg for the poor! However we give yet at the door of a church, or at the communion, whether with indifference or joy, whether out of cuſtom, ſhame, or love, we ſeldom examine. But that important branch of St. James, *pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father*, which conſiſts in *viſiting the fatherleſs and widows in their afflictions*, is with many almoſt as much out of date, as a pilgrimage to our Lady of Loretto.

O ye forſaken ſons of poverty, and ancient daughters of ſorrow, who pine away in your deſolate garrets or cellars, without fire in winter, deſtitute of food, phyſic, or nurſe in ſickneſs: raiſe a moment your emaciated bodies wrapt up in thread-bare blankets, if you are poſſeſſed of any ſuch a covering; and tell me, tell the world how many of our gay profeſſors of Religion have ſought and found you out in your deplorable circumſtances! How many are come to viſit, in you, and worſhip with you, *the man of ſorrows*; who once lay on the cold ground in a bloody ſweat? When did they make your bed in your ſickneſs? When have they kindly inquired into all your wants, ſympathized in all your temptation, ſupported your drooping heads in a fainting fit, revived your ſinking ſpirits with ſuitable cordials, gently wiped your cold ſweats, or mixed them with their tears of pity?

Alas? You ſometimes find more compaſſion and aſſiſtance in your extremity, from thoſe who never *name the name of Chriſt*, than from our eaſy Antinomian Laodicean *Believers*. Their wants are richly ſupplied; that is enough: they do not inquire into yours, and *you* are aſhamed or afraid to trouble them with the diſmal ſtory. Nor indeed would ſome of them underſtand you if you did. Their uninterrupted abundance makes them as incapable

pable of feeling for you, as the warm inhabitants of Ethiopa are to feel for the frozen Icelanders.

While the table of some Believer (so called) is alternately loaded with a variety of delicate meats, and rich wines, what have *ye* to sustain sinking nature? Alas! One can soon see your all of food and physic. A pitcher of water stands by your bed-side upon a stool, the only piece of furniture left in your wretched apartment. The Lord God bless the poor widow that brought it you, with her *two mites!* Heaven reward a thousand-fold the loving creature that not only shares with you, but freely bestows upon you *all her living, even all that she has;* when *they* forget to inquire after you, and to send you something out of their luxurious abundance! *The Son of Man*, once *forsaken by all the disciples, and comforted by an angel, make her bed in the time of sickness!* And a waiting band of celestial Spirits *carry* her charitable soul *into* Lazarus's *bosom* in the awful hour of dissolution! I had rather be in her case, though she should not confidently profess the faith, than in *yours*, O ye caressed Believers, who let your affluence overflow to those that have more need to learn frugality in the school of scarceness, than to receive bounties which feed their sensuality and indulge their pride.

And ye women professing godliness, who enjoy the comforts of health and abundance, in whose *streets there is no complaining, no decay*, whose *daughters* are *as the polished corners of the temple;* when did *you* ever want visitors? Alas! Ye have too many for the good they do you, or that you do them. Does not your conversation, which begins with the love of Jesus, terminate in religious scandal; as naturally as your soul, which once *began in the spirit, ends* now *in the flesh?* O that your visitors were as ready to attend workhouses, jails, infirmaries and hospitals, as they are to wait upon you! O that at least, like the Dorcases, the Phebes and Priscillas of old, you would teach them cheerfully to work for the poor, to be the free servants of the Church,

and tender nurſes of the ſick! O that they ſaw in you all, how the holy women, the *widows who were widows indeed*, formerly *entertained ſtrangers, waſhed the ſaints' feet, inſtructed the younger women*, and *continued night and day in prayer!* But alas! *The love of many*, once warm as *the ſmoaking flax, is waxed cold* inſtead of taking fire and flaming: They who once began to *ſeek the profit of many*, now *ſeek their own* eaſe, or intereſt; *their own* honor, or indulgence.

Almoſt all, when they come to the foot of the hill Difficulty, take their leave of Jeſus as a guide, becauſe he leads on through ſpiritual death to the regeneration. Some diſliking that *door*, like *thieves and robbers climb up* an eaſier *way*. And others leaving the high way of the croſs, under the fair pretence that blind Papiſts walk therein, make for themſelves and others broad and downward roads to aſcend the ſteep hill of Zion.

Thoſe eaſy paths are innumerable, like the people that walk in them. O that *my eyes* like David's did *run down like water, becauſe men* profeſſing godlineſs *keep not God's law*, and *are* even *offended at it! Their mouth talketh of vanity, they diſſemble with their double heart*, and *their right hand is a right hand of* ſloth, or poſitive *iniquity*. O that I had the tenderneſs of St Paul, to *tell you even weeping of thoſe who mind earthly things*; thoſe *who have ſinned and have not repented*; thoſe who, while they boaſt they are *made free by the Son* of God, are *brought under the power of* many *things*; whom fooliſh deſires, abſurd fears, undue attachments, imported ſuperfluities and diſagreeable habits, keep in the moſt ridiculous bondage!

O that my head were waters, and my eyes fountains of tears, to deplore with Jeremiah *the ſlain of the daughter of God's people*; who *live in pleaſure and are dead while they live!* And to lament over ſpiritual Phariſees of every ſort; thoſe who ſay *Stand by, I am holier than thou*; and thoſe who fix the names of *poor creatures! blind!* and *carnal!* upon every publican

publican they see in the temple; and boldly placing themselves among the *elect, thank God they are not as other men*, and in particular as the *reprobates!*

Who can number the *adulterers and adulteresses*: who *know not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God!* The concealed idolaters, who have their *chambers of imagery* within, and *set up their idols in their hearts!* The envious Cains, who carry murder in their breast! The profane Esaus, who give up their birth right for a sensual gratification; and covetous Judases, who *sell the truth* which they should *buy*, and part with Christ *for filthy lucre's sake! The Sons of God*, who *look at the fair daughters of men, and take to themselves wives of all which they chuse!* The gay Dinahs who *visit the daughters of the land*, and come home polluted in body or in soul: The filthy Onans, *who defile the temple of God:* The *Prophets of Bethel*, who *deceive the Prophets of Judah*, intice them out of the way of self-denial, and bring the roaring lion and death upon them! The fickle Marcuses, who *depart* when they should *go to the work!* The self-made prophets, who *run before they are sent*, and scatter instead of *profiting the people!* The spiritual Absaloms, who rise against their Fathers in the gospel; and in order to *reign without them*, raise a rebellion against them! The furious Zedekiahs, who *make themselves horns of iron to push* the true servants of the Lord, because they will not *prophesy smooth things, and deceit*, as they do!

Who can count the fretful Jonahs, who are *angry to death* when the *worm* of disappointment *smites the gourd* of their creature-happiness? The weak Aarons who dare not resist a multitude and are carried by the stream into the greatest absurdities? The jealous Miriams, who rise against the ministers that God honours? The crafty Zibas, who calumniate and supplant their brethren? The treacherous Joabs, who *kiss* them, to get an opportunity of *stabbing them under the fifth rib?* The busy

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Sons of Zeruiah, who perpetually ſtir up reſentment and wrath? The miſchievous Doegs, who carry about poiſonous ſcandal, and blow up the fire of diſcord? The hypocritical Gehazis, who look like ſaints before the maſters and miniſters, and yet can impudently lie, and impiouſly cheat? The Gibeonites, always buſy in hewing wood and drawing water, in going through the drudgery of outward ſervices, without ever aſpiring at the adoption of ſons? The halting Naamans, who ſerve the Lord and bow to Rimmon: The backſliding Solomons, who once *choſe wiſdom*, but now purſue folly in her moſt extravagant and impious forms? The apoſtatizing Alexanders, who *tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant wherewith they were ſanctified, an unholy thing?* And, to include multitudes in one claſs, the Samaritans, who, by a common mixture of truth and error, of heavenly and earthly mindedneſs, *worſhip the Lord and ſerved their gods;* are one day for God, and the next for Mammon: Or the thouſands in Iſrael who *halt between two opinions*, crying out when Elijah prevails, *The Lord He is the God!* and when Jezebel triumphs returning to the old ſong, "*O Baal ſave us!* O Trinity of the world, Money, Pleaſure and Honor, make us happy!"

VI.

Time would fail to deſcribe the innumerable branches of *Antinomianiſm*, with all the fruits they bear. It may be compared to the aſtoniſhing tree, which Nebuchadnezzar ſaw in his myſterious dream: *A ſtrong tree, ſet in the midſt of the* Church; *the height thereof reaches unto heaven, and the ſight thereof unto the ends of the earth. Its leaves are fair and its fruit much.* Thouſands ſleep under its fatal ſhadow, and myriads feed upon its pernicious fruit.

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At a distance it looks like *the tree of life planted in the midst of Paradise*; but it only proves *the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The Woman* (the Antinomian Church) *is deceived* by the appearance. *She sees that it is good for food, pleasant to the eye, and desirable to make one wise: She eats* to the full, and flushed with fond hopes of heaven, nay fancying herself *as God*, she presents of the poisonous fruit that intoxicates her to the nobler part of the Church, the obedient members of the second Adam.

O ye sons of God and daughters of Abraham, who, in compliance with the insinuation of this deceived Eve, have already stretched forth your hands to receive her fatal present, instantly draw them back, for eternal *death is in the fruit*. Fly from the tree on which she banquets, to the tree of *life*, the despised cross of Jesus; and there feed on *Him crucified*, till you are *crucified with him*; till *the body of sin is destroyed*, and you feel eternal life abundantly circulating through all your sanctified powers.

And ye uncorrupted, self-denying followers of Jesus, whom love and duty still compel to bear your cross after him, join to pray that *the Watcher* and his *holy Ones* may *come down from heaven, and cry aloud Hew down the tree* of Antinomianism; *cut off its branches, shake off its leaves, scatter its fruit, and let* not even *the stump of its roots be left in the earth*. Your prayer is heard,

> He comes! he comes! the Judge severe!
> The seventh trumpet speaks him near.

Behold he appears in his glory, with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all. The thrones are cast down; the Ancient of days doth sit, whose garment is white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool: his throne is like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issues, and comes forth from before him: Thousand thousands ministers unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand

ſtand before him. The trumpet ſounds: The ſea gives up the dead which are in it, death and hades deliver up the dead which are in them. The juſt are ſeparated from the unjuſt; and while *the earth and the heaven flee away from the face of him that ſits on the great reſplendant throne, and there is found no place for them; the judgment ſo ſet, the books are opened, and the dead, ſmall and great, are judged, every one according to their works.*

Fear not, Ye Righteous. Ye are in the hand of the Lord, and there ſhall no torment touch you. In the ſight of the unwiſe ye ſeemed to die, they laughed at your *dying daily: but ye are in peace, and your joy is full of immortality. Having been a little chaſtiſed, you ſhall be greatly rewarded; for God proved you and found you worthy for himſelf. And* now that *the time of your viſitation is come, judge the nations,* and *reign with your Lord for ever*; *for ſuch as are faithful in love ſhall abide with him*; *grace and mercy are to his ſaints, and he careth for his elect: He ſets his ſheep on his right hand,* and ſtretched it towards them with raviſhed looks of benignity and love, he finally juſtifies by works, thoſe whom he freely juſtified by faith. How ſublime and ſolemn is the ſentence!

Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and ye gave me meat; I was thirſty and ye gave me drink; *I was a ſtranger and ye took me in*; *naked and ye cloathed me: I was ſick and ye viſited me*; *I was in priſon and ye came to me.*——And do not aſk with aſtoniſhment when you gave *me* all theſe tokens of your love; for whatever you did out of regard to me, my law and my people, you did it *in my name*; and whatever you did *in my name* to the leaſt of my creatures, and in particular to *the leaſt of theſe my brethren, you did it unto me.*

As if he ſaid, "Think not I am biaſſed by lawleſs partiality. No: I am *the Author of eternal ſalvation to them that obeyed me,* and made a right

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ase of my *sanctifying blood*. Such are the *blessed of my Father*; and such are *ye*. Your *faith unfeigned* produced unfeigned love: You *loved not in word only, but in deed and in truth*; witness the works of mercy that adorned your lives, or the fruits of the spirit that now replenish your souls. *You, of all the families of the earth, have I known* with approbation. Ye have not *denied me in works*; or if ye have, bitter repentance, and purifying, renovating faith followed your denial; and by *keeping* that *faith*, ye *continued in my covenant*, and *endured unto the end.*

" Thou seest it, righteous Father, for to Thee the books are always open. Thou readest *my laws in their mind*, and beholdest my loving precepts *written in their hearts*: I therefore *confess them before Thee*; and *before* You my *Angels*, who have seen them agonize, and *follow me through the regeneration.* I take the new heavens and the new earth to witness, that *I am to them a God, and they are to me a people.* They *walked* WORTHY *of God, who called them to his kingdom and glory*; therefore *they are worthy of me.*"

" I have confessed your persons, O ye *just men made perfect.* Ye precious *jewels* of my mediatorial crown; let me next reward your works. In the days of my flesh I declared, that *a cup of water given in my name* (and my name, ye know, is *Mercy, Goodness* and *Love*) *should in no wise lose its reward*; and that *whosoever* should *forsake* earthly friends or property for righteousness' sake, should have *an hundred fold, and everlasting life.* The pillars of heaven have given way; but my promise stands firm as the basis of my throne. Triumph in my faithfulness, as you have in my forgiving love. I bestow on all, crowns of blissful immortality; *I appoint unto* each *a kingdom which shall not be destroyed.* Be *Kings and Priests unto God for ever.* Prepare to follow me to the realms of glory, and there *whatsoever is right* (δικαιον) *that shall ye receive*; in *just* proportion to the various degrees of perfection,

tion, with which you have obeyed my law, and improved your talents."

Thus are the perſons of the righteous accepted, and their works *praiſed in the gate* of heaven, and *regarded in the kingdom of their Father.* Thus they receive crowns of life and glory; but it is only to caſt them to all eternity, with unutterable tranſports, grateful, humble love, at the feet of him who was crowned with piercing thorns, and hung bleeding upon the croſs, to purchaſe their thrones.

While they ſhout *Salvation to God and the Lamb!* the Judge turns to the left hand, where trembling myriads ſtand waiting for their fearful doom. O how does confuſion cover their faces, and guilty horror rack their breaſts, while he ſays with the firmneſs of the eternal Lawgiver, and the majeſty of the Lord of Lords: *Depart from me ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; ſick and in priſon, and ye viſited me not* † *!*

Some

† Should ſome ſincere followers of Chriſt read theſe lines, and be convinced they never viſited Chriſt *in priſon*, never entertained him in a ſtranger, &c. it is proper they ſhould be humbled for having overlooked this important part of *pure religion*; and conſider next how far it is in their power literally to practiſe it. Some live at a great diſtance from priſons, and are neceſſarily detained at home. Some (as women) could not in many places viſit priſoners with decency. Others are altogether unabled to do good to the ſouls or bodies of the ſick and captives, being themſelves ſick, poor, and confined. If thou art in any of theſe caſes, believer, canſt not thou influence others to do what is out of thy power? Canſt thou not ſend the relief thou art unabled to carry, and ſhew thy good-will by cutting off thy ſuperfluities, ſparing ſome of thy conveniencies, and at times a little of thy neceſſaries for thy ſick, naked, hungry or impriſoned Lord? If thou art ſo indigent and infirm, that thou canſt abſolutely do nothing for the bodies of thy fellow-creatures,

Some are not yet *speechless*; they only falter. With the trembling insolence of Adam, not yet driven out of paradise, they even dare to plead their desparate cause. While stubborn sons of Belial say, "Lord, thy Father is merciful; and if thou didst die for *all*, why not for *us*?" While obstinate Pharisees plead the good they did in their own name, to supersede the Redeemer's merit; methinks I hear a bold Antinomian addressing thus the Lord of glory:

"*Lord, when saw we* THEE *hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to* THEE? Had we seen THEE, dear Lord, in any distress, how gladly would we have relieved thy want! Numbers can witness how well we spoke of *thee*, and *thy* righteousness: It was all our boast. Bring it out in this important hour. Hide not the gospel of thy free grace. We always delighted in pure doctrine, in "Salvation without any condition; especially without the condition of works." Stand, gracious Lord, stand by us, and the preachers of thy free grace, who *made us hope thou wouldst confirm their word.*"

"While they taught us to call thee *Lord, Lord*, they assured us that love would *constrain* us to do good works; but finding no inward constraint to

creatures, endeavour to do works of mercy for their souls; exhort, reprove, comfort, instruct, as thou canst, all around thee, in the meekness of wisdom.' If thou canst do works of mercy, neither with thy tongue, hands, nor feet, then be the more diligent to do them with thy *heart*. In spirit, visit prisons and sick-beds. If thou hast no house to take in strangers, open to them thy heart; earnestly recommend them to God, who can supply all their wants, and open to them *the Gate of Heaven*, when they lie under a hedge; as He once did to Jacob in the fields of Bethel. Give thy heart continually to the Lord, and thou givest more than a mountain of gold; and the moment thou canst *give a cup of water in his name*, bestow it as freely as he did his blood; remembering, *God loves a cheerful giver*, and that it is *accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.*

entertain ſtrangers, viſit the ſick, and relieve priſoners, we did it not; ſuppoſing we were not called thereto. They continually told us, "human righteouſneſs was mere filth before thee; and we could not appear but to our everlaſting ſhame in any righteouſneſs but thine in the day of judgment." As to works, we were afraid of doing them, leſt we ſhould have *worked out* abominations inſtead of *our ſalvation.*"

"And indeed, Lord, what need was there of our *working it out?* For they perpetually aſſured us, it was *finiſhed*; ſaying, if we did any thing towards it, we worked for life, fell from grace like the bewitched Galatians, ſpoiled thy perfect work; and expoſed ourſelves to the deſtruction which awaits yonder trembling Phariſees."

"They likewiſe aſſured us, that all depended on *thy* decrees; and if we could but firmly believe our *election*, it was a ſure ſign we were intereſted in thy ſalvation. We did ſo; and now, Lord, for the ſake of a few dung-works we have omitted, let not our hope periſh! Let not electing and everlaſting love fail! Viſit our offences with a rod, but take not thy loving kindneſs altogether from us; and break not David's covenant, ordered in all things and ſure, of which we have ſo often made our boaſt."

"May it pleaſe thee alſo to conſider, that if we did not love and aſſiſt ſome of thoſe whom thou calleſt *thy Brethren*, it was becauſe they appeared to us ſo exceeding legal; ſo ſtrongly ſet againſt free grace, that we judged them to be obſtinate Phariſees, and dangerous reprobates. We therefore thought that in hating and oppoſing them, we did thee ſervice, and walked in thy ſteps. For thou haſt ſaid, *It is enough if the ſervant is as his Lord*; and ſuppoſing *thou* didſt *hate them*, as thou doeſt Satan; *we* thought we need not be more righteous than thou, by loving them more than thou didſt."

"O

"O suffer us to speak on, and tell thee, we were champions for thy free grace. Like true Protestants, we could have burned against the doctrine of a second justification by works. Let then *grace* justify us *freely without works*. Shut those books † filled with the account of our deeds, open the arms of thy mercy, and receive us just as we are."

"If *free grace* cannot justify us alone, let *faith* do it, together with free grace: We do *believe* finished salvation, Lord; we can join in the most evangelical creeds, and are ready to confess the virtue of thy atoning blood. But if thou sayest, we have *trampled* it *under foot*, and *made it a common thing*, grant us our last request, and it is enough."

"Cut out the immaculate garment of *thy righteousness* into robes that may fit us all, and put them upon us by *imputation*: So shall our nakedness be gloriously covered. We confess we have not dealt our bread to the hungry; but impute to us thy feeding 5000 people with loaves and fishes. We have seldom given drink to the thirsty, and often *put our bottle to* those who were not athirst; but impute to us thy turning water into wine, to refresh the guests at the marriage-feast in Cana; and thy loud call, *in the last day of the feast* at Jerusalem; *If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink*. We never supposed it was our duty to *be given to hospitality*; but impute to us thy loving invitations to strangers, thy kind assurances of receiving *all that come to thee*; thy comfortable promises of *casting out none*, and of feeding them even with thy *flesh* and *blood*. We did not clothe

† This plea is excellent when a man comes to Christ, his High Priest, as a sinner for pardon and holiness, or for his first justification on earth; but it will be absurd when he *stands before the throne* of Christ as a rebellious subject, or *before his judgment-seat* as a criminal in the last day

the naked as we had opportunity and ability: impute to us thy patient parting with thy seamless garment, for the benefit of thy murderers. We did not visit sick-beds and prisons, we were afraid of fevers, and especially of the jail-distemper: But compassionately impute to us thy visiting Jarius's daughter, and *Peter's wife's mother, who lay sick of a fever;* and put to our account thy visiting putrefying Lazarus in the offensive prison of the grave."

"Thy imputed righteousness, Lord, can alone answer all the demands of thy law and gospel. We did not dare to *fast;* we should have been called *legal* and *Papists* if we had; but thy forty days fasting in the wilderness, and thy continual abstinence imputed to us, will be self-denial enough to justify us ten times over. We did not *take up our cross;* but impute to us thy *carrying* THINE; and even fainting under the oppressive load. We did not *mortify the deeds of the flesh, that we might live:* This would have been evidently "working for life;" but impute to us the crucifixion of *thy* body, instead of our *crucifying* OUR *flesh with its affections and lusts.* We hated private prayer; but impute to us thy love of that duty, and the prayer thou didst offer upon a mountain all night. We have been rather hard to forgive, but that defect will be abundantly made up, if thou imputest to us thy forgiving of the dying thief: And if that will not do, add, we beseech thee, the merit of that good saying of thine, *Forgive and you shall be forgiven.* We have cheated the king of his customs; but no matter, only impute to us thy exact paying of the tribute-money, together with thy good advice, *Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.*"

"It is true, we have brought up our children in vanity, and thou never hadst any to bring up. May not thy mercy find out an expedient, and impute to us instead of it, thy obedience to thy parents?

parents? And if we have received the ſacrament unworthily, and thou canſt not cover that ſin with thy worthy *receiving*, indulge us with the imputation of thy worthy *inſtitution* of it, and that will do yet better."

"In ſhort, Lord, own us *freely* as thy children. Impute to us thy perfect righteouſneſs. Caſt it as a cloke upon us, to cover our filthy ſouls and polluted bodies. "We will have no righteouſneſs but thine:" make no mention, we beſeech thee, of *our* righteouſneſs and perſonal holineſs; they are but *filthy rags*, which thy purity forbids thee to take into heaven; therefore accept us without, and we ſhall ſhout *free grace*, *imputed righteouſneſs*, and *finiſhed ſalvation*, to eternity."

While the bold antinomian offers, or prepares to offer, this moſt impious plea, the Lord, who *is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*, caſts a flaming look upon all the obſtinate violaters of his Law. It pierces their conſcience, rouzes all its drowzy powers, and reſtores their memory to its original perfection. Not one wiſh paſſed their heart, or thought their brain, but is inſtantly brought to their remembrance: *the books are opened* in their own breaſt, and every character as a voice which anſwers to the voice of *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*.

"Shall I pervert judgment, ſays he, and juſtify the wicked for a bribe? The bribe of your abominable praiſes? *Think you*, by your baſe flatteries, to *eſcape the righteous judgment of God?* Is not my *wrath revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs, and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs?* Much more againſt you, ye *Veſſels of wrath;* who hold an impious abſurdity in matchleſs inſolence."

"Said I not to Cain himſelf at the beginning, *If thou doeſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted?* Perſonal holineſs, which ye ſcorned, is the *wedding garment* I now look for. *I ſwear in my wrath that,*

without it, none shall taste of my heavenly supper. Ye have rejected my word of commandment, *and I reject you from being kings. Ye cried unto me, and I delivered you. Yet have ye forsaken me and served other gods; therefore I will deliver you no more: go and cry unto the gods whom ye have chosen. I wound the hairy scalp of such as have gone on still in their wickedness. Whosoever hath sinned against me* to the last, *him do I blot out of my book:* and this have you done, *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers,* awake to everlasting shame!——*Will ye set the briers and thorns against me in battle,* and make them pass *for roses of Sharon,* and *lillies of the valleys? I will go through them with a look,* and *consume them together. The day is come that burneth like an oven: All that have* DONE *wickedly are stubble,* and must *be burnt up root and branch. Upon* such *I rain snares, fire and brimstone; storm and tempest: this is the portion of their cup. Drink the dregs of it, Ye hypocrites, depart!* And *wring them out in everlasting burnings.*"

"Said I not, *He that* DOES *good is of God, but he that* DOES *evil is not of God: Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life:* for *he that overcometh,* and he only, *shall be cloathed in white raiment. and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.* And shall I keep *your* name in that book for having *continued* in *doing evil?* Shall I give *you* the crown of life for having been *unfaithful* unto death; and clothe *you* with the bright robes of my glory, because you *defiled* your *garments* to the last? Delusive hope! *Because your mind was not to do good, be ye* rather *cloathed with cursing, like as with a garment! Let it come into* your *bowels like water, and like oil into* your *bones!*"

VII.

If *these shall go into eternal punishment*; if such will be the dreadful end of all the impenitent Nicolaitans; if our churches and chapels swarm with them, if they croud our communion-tables, if they are found in most of our houses, and too many of our pulpits: if the seeds of their fatal disorder are in all our breasts; if they produce Antinomianism around us in all its forms; if we see bold Antinomians in *principle*, barefaced Antinomians in *practice*, and sly *pharisaical Antinomians*, who speak well of the law, to break it with greater advantage; should not every one *examine himself whether he is in the faith*, and whether he has an *holy Christ* in his heart, as well as a *sweet Jesus* upon his tongue: lest he should one day swell the tribe of antinomian reprobates? Does it not become every minister of Christ to drop his prejudices, and consider whether he ought not to imitate the old Watchman, who 15 months ago, gave a *legal alarm* to all the watchmen that are in connexion with him? And should we not do the church excellent service, if agreeing to lift up our voices together against the common enemy, we gave God no rest in prayer, and our hearers in preaching, till we all *did our first works*, and *our latter end*, like Job's *exceeded our beginning?*

Near forty years ago, some of the ministers of Christ, in our church, were called out of the extreme of self-righteousness. Flying from it we have run into the opposite, with equal violence. Now that we have learned wisdom by what we have suffered in going beyond the limits of truth both ways, let us return to a just scriptural medium. Let us equally maintain the two evangelical

gelical axioms on which the gospel is founded; (1.) "All our salvation is of God by free grace, through the alone merits of Christ." And (2.) "All our damnation is of ourselves, through our avoidable unfaithfulness."

This second truth, as important as one half of the Bible, on which it rests, has not only been set aside as useless by thousands, but generally exploded as unscriptural, dangerous and subversive of true protestantism. Thus has the gospel-balance been broken, and St. James's pure religion despised. What we owe to Truth in a state of oppression, hath engaged me to cast in two mites into the scale of truth, which Mr. W. has the courage to defend against multitudes of good men, who keep one another in countenance, under their common mistake. I do not want *his* scale to preponderate to the disadvantage of free grace: If it did, far from rejoicing in it, I would instantly throw the insignificant weight of my pen into the other scale; being fully persuaded that Christ can never be so truly honored, nor souls so well edified, when we overdo on either side of the question, as when we scripturally maintain the *whole* truth as it is in Jesus.

"But are we not in as much danger from overdoing in pharisaic works, as in antinomian faith?"

Not at present: The stream runs too rapidly on the side of lawless faith, to leave any just room to fear we shall be immediately carried into excessive working. There would be some ground for this objection; if we saw most professors of religion obstinately refusing to drink any thing but water, eat any thing but dry bread or cheap vegetables; fasting themselves into mere skeletons; wearing sack-cloth instead of soft linen; lying on the bare ground, with a stone for their pillow; imitating Origen, by literally *making themselves Eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake;* turning hermits,

hermits, ſpending whole nights in contemplation in churches and churchyards; giving away all their goods, the neceſſaries of life not excepted; allowing themſelves only three or four hours ſleep, and even breaking that ſhort reſt to pray or praiſe; overpowering their bodies the next day with hard labour, to keep them under; ſcourging their backs unto blood every day; or forgetting themſelves in prayer for hours in the coldeſt weather, till they have almoſt loſt the uſe of their limbs. But I aſk any unprejudiced perſon, who knows what is now called, "goſpel-liberty," whether we are in danger of being thus *righteous over-much*, or legal to ſuch an extreme?

I grant however we are not abſolutely ſafe from any quarter: let us therefore continually ſtand on our guard. The right wing of Immanuel's army, which defends living faith, is partly gone over to the enemy, and fights under the Nicolaitan banner. The left wing, which defends good works, is far from being out of the reach of thoſe crafty adverſaries. Therefore, as we are, or may be attacked on every ſide, let us faithfully uſe *the word of truth, the power of God, and the armour of righteouſneſs on the right hand and on the left.* Let us gallantly fly where the attack is the hotteſt, which now, *in the religious world*, is evidently where groſs *Criſpianity* (if I may uſe the word) is continually obtruded upon us as true *Chriſtianity*: I ſay, *in the religious world; for*, in this controverſy, *what have I to do to judge them alſo that are without? Do not ye judge them that are* WITHIN, and repreſent them as oppoſers of free grace?

Should Phariſees, while we are engaged in repelling the Nicolaitans, try to rob us of preſent and free juſtification by faith, under pretence of maintaining juſtification by works in the laſt day; or ſhould they ſet us upon unneceſſary, and unſcriptural works, we ſhall be glad of your aſſiſtance to repel them alſo.

If

If you grant it us, and do not despise ours, the world shall admire in the *Shulamite* (the Church at unity in herself) *the company of two armies*, ready mutually to support each other against the opposite attacks of the Pharisees and the Nicolaitans; the *popish workers* who exclude the gospel, and the modern gnostics, the *Protestant Antinomians*, who explode the Law.

May the Lord God help us to sail safely through these opposite rocks, keeping at an equal distance from both, by taking Christ for our Pilot, and the Scripture for our Compass! So shall we enter full sail the double haven of present and eternal rest. Once we were in immediate danger of splitting upon *Works, without faith;* now we are threatened with destruction from faith *without works:* May the merciful Keeper of Israel save us from both, by a *living faith*, legally productive of all good works, or by *good works*, evangelically springing from a living faith!

Should a divine blessing upon these sheets, bring one single Reader a step towards that good old way, or only confirm one single believer in it, I shall be *rewarded a hundred fold* for this little *labour of love;* and I shall be even content to see it represented as the invidious labour of malice: for what is my reputation to the profit of one blood-bought soul!

Beseeching you, dear Sir, for whom these letters are first intended, to set me right where I am wrong; and not to despise what may recommend itself in them to reason and conscience, on account of the blunt and Helvetic manner in which they are written, I remain, with sincere respect,

Honored and Reverend Sir,

Your affectionate and obedient servant in the practical gospel of Christ,

J. F.

POSTSCRIPT.

Since these Letters were sent to the press, I have seen a pamphlet, intitled, "A Conversation between Richard Hill, Esq; the Rev. Mr. Madan, and Father Walsh," a Monk at Paris, who condemned Mr. Wesley's Minutes as "too near Pelagianism," and the author as "a Pelagian;" adding, that, "*their* doctrine was a great deal nearer that of the Protestants." Hence the editor concludes, that "the principles in the extract of the Minutes are too rotten even for a Papist to rest upon, and supposes that popery is about the mid-way between Protestantism and Mr. J. Wesley." I shall just make a few strictures upon that performance.

(1.) If an Arian came to me, and said: You believe that *Jesus Christ is God over all, blessed for ever.* "Pelagius, that heretic who was publicly excommunicated by the whole Catholic Church," was of your sentiment; therefore you are a Pelagian; give up your heresy: Should I, upon such an assertion, give up the Godhead of our Saviour? Certainly no. And shall I, upon a similar argument, advanced by the help of a French Monk, give up truths with which the practical gospel of Jesus Christ must stand or fall? God forbid!

(2.) We desire to be confronted with all the pious Protestant divines, except those of Dr. Crisp's class, who are a party: But, who would believe it? The suffrage of a Papist is brought against us! Astonishing! That our opposers should think it worth their while to raise one recruit against us in the immense city of Paris, where fifty thousand might be raised against the Bible itself!

(3.) So long as Christ, the Prophets, and Apostles are for us, together with the multitude of the Puritan divines of the last century, we shall smile at an army of Popish friars. The knotted

whips that hang by their ſide, will no more frighten us from our Bibles, than the *ipſe dixit* of a Benedictine monk will make us explode, as heretical, propoſitions which are demonſtrated to be ſcriptural.

(4.) An argument which has been frequently uſed of late againſt the *Anticalviniſt* Divines is, "This is downright Popery! This is worſe than Popery itſelf!" And honeſt Proteſtants have been driven by it to embrace doctrines, which were once no leſs contrary to the dictates of their conſcience, than they are ſtill to the word of God. It is proper therefore ſuch perſons ſhould be informed, that St. Auguſtin, the Calvin of the fourth century, is one of the Saints whom the Popes have in the higheſt veneration; and that a great number of friars in the church of Rome are champions for Calviniſm, and oppoſe St. Paul's doctrine, that *the grace of God bringeth ſalvation, has appeared unto all men*, as ſtrenuouſly as ſome *real* Proteſtants do among us. Now, if good Father Walſh is one of that ſtamp, what wonder is it that he ſhould ſo well agree with the gentlemen who conſulted him! If Calviniſm and Proteſtantiſm are ſynonimous terms, as ſome divines would make us believe, many monks may well ſay, that *their doctrine is a great deal nearer that of the Proteſtants* than the Minutes; for they may even paſs for *real Proteſtants*.

(5.) But whether the good friar is a hot *Janſeniſt*, or only a warm *Thomiſt*, (ſo they call the popiſh Calviniſts in France) we appeal from his bar to the tribunal of Jeſus Chriſt, and from the publiſhed converſation *to the law and the teſtimony*. What is the deciſion of a popiſh monk to the expreſs declarations of the ſcripture, the dictates of common ſenſe, the experience of regenerate ſouls, and the writings of a cloud of Proteſtant divines? No more than a grain of looſe ſand to the ſolid rock on which the church is founded.

I hope

I hope the gentlemen concerned in the converſation lately publiſhed, will excuſe the liberty of this poſtſcript. I reverence their piety, rejoice in their labours, and honor their warm zeal, for the proteſtant cauſe .But that very zeal, if not accompanied with a cloſe attention to every part of the goſpel-truth, may betray them into miſtakes which may ſpread as far as their reſpectable names; I think it therefore my duty to publiſh theſe ſtrictures, leſt any of my readers ſhould pay more regard to the good-natured friar, who has been preſſed into the ſervice of Dr. Criſp, than to St. John, St. Paul, St. James, and Jeſus Chriſt, on whoſe plain declarations I have ſhewn that the Minutes are founded.

FINIS.

A

THIRD CHECK

TO

ANTINOMIANISM;

IN A

LETTER to the AUTHOR of

PIETAS OXONIENSIS:

By the Vindicator of the

Rev. Mr. WESLEY's MINUTES.

"Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and *scriptural* doctrine; for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." 2 Tim. iv. 2, 3.

"*Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, but let brotherly love continue.*" Tit. i. 13. Heb. xiii. 1.

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A

THIRD CHECK

TO

ANTINOMIANISM, &c.

Honoured and dear Sir,

ACCEPT my ſincere thanks for the Chriſtian courteſy, with which you treat me in your five letters. The title-page informs me, that a concern for *mourning backſliders, and ſuch as have been diſtreſſed by reading Mr. Weſley's minutes, or the vindication of them*, has procured me the honour of being called to a public correſpondence with you. Permit me, dear Sir, to inform you in my turn, that a fear, leſt Dr. Criſp's balm ſhould be applied, inſtead of the *balm of Gilead*, to Laodicean loiterers, who may haply have been brought to penitential *diſtreſs*, obliges me to anſwer you in the ſame public manner, in which you have addreſſed me.

Some of our friends will undoubtedly blame us for not yet dropping the conteſted point. But others will candidly conſider, that controverſy, though not deſirable in itſelf, yet properly managed, has a hundred times reſcued truth groaning under the laſh of triumphant error. We are indebted to our Lord's controverſies with the Phariſees and Scribes for a conſiderable part of the four goſpels. And to the end of the world the church will bleſs God, for the ſpirited manner, in which St. Paul, in his epiſtles to the Romans and Galatians, defended the controverted

point of a believer's present justification by faith; as well as for the steadiness with which St. James, St. John, St. Peter, and St. Jude, carried on their important controversy with the Nicolaitans, who abused St. Paul's doctrine to the Antinomian purposes.

Had it not been for controversy, Romish priests would to this day feed us with Latin mallies and a wafer-god. Some bold propositions, advanced by Luther against the doctrine of indulgences, unexpectedly brought on the reformation. They were so irrationally attacked by the infatuated Papists, and so scripturally defended by the resolute Protestants, that these kingdoms opened their eyes, and saw thousands of images and errors fall before the ark of evangelical truth.

From what I have advanced in my *Second Check*, it appears, if I am not mistaken, that we stand now as much in need of a reformation from Antinomianism, as our ancestors did of a reformation from Popery; and I am not without hope, that the extraordinary attack, which has lately been made on Mr. Wesley's anti-Crispian propositions, and the manner in which they are defended, will open the eyes of many, and check the rapid progress of so enchanting and pernicious an evil. This hope inspires me with fresh courage; and turning from the honourable and Rev. Mr. Shirley, I presume to face (I trust, in the spirit of love and meekness) my new respectable opponent.

I thank you, Sir, for doing Mr. W. the justice in your

FIRST LETTER

to acknowledge, that "*man's faithfulness is an expression, which may be used in a sober, gospel sense of the words.*" It is just in *such* a sense we use it; nor have you advanced any proof to the contrary.

We never supposed, that "*the faithfulness of God, and the stability of the covenant of grace, are affected by the unfaithfulness of man.*" For, we do not take the young man, *whom Jesus loved*, to be

God.

God. *His unfaithfulneſs* in the mammon of unrighteouſneſs, did not therefore impair, in the leaſt degree, the *divine faithfulneſs*. And we are perſuaded, our Lord keeps *his covenant*, when he *ſpues a lukewarm*, unfaithful *Laodicean out of his mouth*, as well as when he ſays to the *good and faithful ſervant*, *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*. For the ſame covenant of grace which ſays, *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved—he that abideth in me, bringeth forth much fruit*, ſays alſo, *He that believeth not ſhall be damned—every branch in me that beareth not fruit is caſt forth and burned*.

Thanks be to divine grace, we make our boaſt of *God's faithfulneſs* as well as you, though we take care not to charge him, even indirectly with our own unfaithfulneſs. But from the words which you quote, *My covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with his ſeed*, &c. we ſee no more reaſon to conclude that the *obſtinately* unfaithful ſeed of Chriſt, ſuch as *Hymeneus*, *Philetus*, and thoſe who to the laſt tread *under foot the blood of the covenant wherewith they were ſanctified*, ſhall not be caſt off; than to aſſert that many individuals of David's royal family, ſuch as Abſolom and Amnon, were not cut off on account of their flagrant and *obſtinate* wickedneſs.

We beſeech you therefore, for the ſake of a thouſand careleſs Antinomians, to remember that the apoſtle ſays to every believer, *Thou ſtandeſt by faith, behold therefore the goodneſs of God towards thee, if thou continue in his goodneſs; otherwiſe thou alſo ſhalt be cut off*. We intreat you to conſider, that even thoſe who admire the point of your epigram, "Whene'er we ſay one thing we mean quite another," will not be pleaſed if you apply it to St. Paul, as you have done to Mr. Weſley. And when we ſee God's covenant with David groſsly abuſed by Antinomians, we beg leave to put them in mind of God's covenant with the houſe of Eli. *Thus ſaith the Lord God of Iſrael, I* CHOSE *thy father out of all the tribes of Iſrael to be my prieſt;* but thou art unfaithful, *thou honoureſt*

thy ſons above me.—I ſaid indeed that thy houſe, and the houſe of thy father, ſhould walk before me for ever: but now be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that deſpiſe me ſhall be lightly eſteemed. Behold the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy houſe; and I will raiſe me up a FAITHFUL *prieſt, that ſhall do according to that which is in my heart.* 1 Sam. 2.

Your SECOND LETTER reſpects *working for life.* You make the beſt of a bad ſubject, and really ſome of your arguments are ſo plauſible, that I do not wonder ſo many men ſhould commence Calviniſts, rather than be at the trouble of detecting their fallacy. I am ſorry, dear Sir, I cannot do it without dwelling upon Calviniſm. My deſign was to oppoſe Antinomianiſm alone; but the vigorous ſtand which you make for it upon Calvinian ground, obliges me to encounter you there, or to give up the truth which I am called to defend. I have long dreaded the alternative of diſpleaſing my friends, or wounding my conſcience; but I muſt yield to the injunctions of the latter, and appeal to the candor of the former. If impetuous rivers of Geneva Calviniſm have ſo long been permitted to flow through England, and even deluge Scotland; have not I ſome reaſon to hope that a rivulet of Geneva Anti-Calviniſm will be ſuffered to glide through ſome of Great-Britain's plains: eſpecially if its little murmur harmonizes with the cleareſt dictates of reaſon, and loudeſt declarations of ſcripture?

Before I weigh your arguments againſt *working for life*, permit me to point out the capital miſtake upon which they turn. You ſuppoſe that free preventing grace does not viſit all men, and that all thoſe in whom it has not prevailed, are as totally dead to the things of God, as a dead body is to the things of this life: and from this unſcriptural ſuppoſition you very reaſonably conclude that we can no more turn to God, than corpſes can turn themſelves in their graves; no more

more *work for life* than putrid carcaſes can help themſelves to a reſurrection.

This main pillar of your doctrine, will appear to you built upon the ſand, if you read the ſcripture in the light of that *mercy which is over all God's works.* There you will diſcover the various diſpenſations of the everlaſting goſpel; your contracted views of divine love will open into the moſt extenſive proſpects; and your exulting ſoul will range through the boundleſs fields of that grace, which is both richly *free* IN *all*, and abundantly *free* FOR *all.*

Let us rejoice with reverence while we read ſuch ſcriptures as theſe; *The Son of Man is come to ſave that which is* LOST, *and to call* SINNERS *to repentance. This is a true ſaying and worthy of all acceptation—worthy of all men to be received, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners.—To this end he both died and roſe again that he might be the Lord of the* DEAD *and* LIVING. *He came not to condemn the* WORLD, *but that the* WORLD *through him might be ſaved, and that at the name of Jeſus* EVERY KNEE *ſhould bow, and* EVERY TONGUE *confeſs that he is Lord.*

"Bound ev'ry heart and ev'ry boſom burn" while we meditate on theſe raviſhing declarations; *God ſo loved the* WORLD *that he gave his only begotten Son, that* WHOSOEVER *believeth on him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life. He was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law*, that is, all mankind; unleſs it can be proved that ſome men never came under the curſe of the law. He is *the friend of* SINNERS, the *phyſician of the* SICK, and *the Saviour of the* WORLD: *He died, the juſt for the* UNJUST; *He is the propitiation, not for our ſins only, but for the ſins of* THE WHOLE WORLD. *One died for* ALL, becauſe ALL *were dead. As in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt*, during the day of their viſitation, *all are bleſſed* with quickning grace, and therefore in the laſt day ALL *ſhall be made alive* to give an account of their bleſſing or talent. *He is the*

Saviour

Saviour of ALL *men, especially of them that believe;* and the news of his birth are *tidings of great joy to* ALL *people. As by the offence of one judgment came upon* ALL MEN, *even so by the righteousness of one the* FREE GIFT *came upon* ALL MEN; for *Christ by the grace of God tasted death for* EVERY MAN; *he is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the* WORLD, therefore *God commandeth* ALL MEN EVERY WHERE *to repent—to look unto him and be saved.*

Do we not take choice jewels from Christ's crown when we explain away these bright testimonies given by his free-grace; *It pleased the Father by him to reconcile* ALL THINGS *to himself.—The kindness and pity of God our Saviour towards* MAN *has appeared.—I will draw all men unto me.—I come* NOT *to judge the* WORLD *but to save the* WORLD.—*He came into the world* TO SAVE SINNERS, the CHIEF not excepted.—*God was in him reconciling the* WORLD *unto himself.* Hence he says to the most obstinate of his opposers, *These things have I spoken unto you that ye might be saved.—If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin* in rejecting me, *but now they have no cloak for their sin,* no excuse for their unbelief.

Once indeed, when the apostles were on the brink of the most dreadful trial, their compassionate Master said, *I pray for them, I pray not for the* WORLD. "As if he had said, their immediate danger makes me pray as if there were but these eleven men in the world, *holy Father keep them.*" But having given them this seasonable testimony of a just preference, he adds, *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them who shall believe:*—and he prays they may be in the WORLD,—*that the* WORLD *may believe—and may know that thou hast sent me.*

If our Lord's *not praying* for a moment on a particular occasion *for the world*, implies that *the world* is absolutely reprobated, we should be glad of an answer to the two following queries. (1.) Why did he pray the next day for Pilate and Herod, Annas and Caiaphas, the Priests and Pharisees,

rifees, the Jewifh mob and Roman foldiers ; in a word for the countlefs multitude of his revilers and murderers ? Were they all elect, or was this ejaculation no prayer ? *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do !* (2.) Why did he commiffion St. Paul to fay, *I exhort firft of all, that fupplications, prayers, and interceffions be made for* ALL MEN, *for this is acceptable in the fight of God* OUR SAVIOUR, who will have ALL MEN *to be* SAVED, *and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and* MEN, *the* MAN *Chrift Jefus : who gave himfelf a ranfom* FOR ALL ?

Without lofing time in proving, that none but artful and defigning men, ufe the word *all* to mean the *lefs number !* and that *all* in fome of the above-mentioned paffages, muft abfolutely mean *all mankind*, as being directly oppofed to *all* that are *condemned* and *die in Adam ;* and without ftopping to expofe the new Calvinian creation of " a whole world of elect ;" upon the preceding fcriptures I raife the following doctrine of free-grace. If *Chrift tafted death for every man*, there is undoubtedly a gofpel for every man, even for thofe who perifh by rejecting it.

St. Paul fays, that *God fhall judge the fecrets of* MEN, *according to his gofpel.* St. Peter afks, *What fhall be the end of thofe, who obey not the* GOSPEL *of God ?* And the apoftle anfwers, *Chrift revealed in flaming fire will take vengeance on them who obey not the* GOSPEL, that is, all the *ungodly who receive the grace of God in vain*, or *turn it into lafciviouſneſs.* They do not perifh becaufe the gofpel is a lie with refpect to them ; but *becaufe they receive not the love of the* TRUTH *that they might be* SAVED. God, to punifh their rejecting the truth, permits that they fhould *believe a lie ; that they all might be damned, who* to the laft hour of their day of grace *believed not the truth, but had pleafure in unrighteouſneſs.*

The latitude of our Lord's commiffion to his miniſters demonſtrates the truth of this doctrine.

Go

Go into ALL *the world, and teach* ALL *nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* Hence thoſe gracious and general invitations, *Ho* EVERY ONE *that thirſteth* after happineſs, *come ye to the waters; If any man thirſteth* after pleaſure, *let him come to me and drink.—Come unto me all ye that labour* for want of *reſt, and I will give it to you.*—WHOSOEVER *will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.—Ye adulterers,—draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you.—Behold I ſtand at the door and knock, if* ANY MAN open, *I will come in and ſup with him. Go out into the highways and hedges, preach the goſpel to* EVERY CREATURE, *and lo I am with you to the end of the world.*

If you compare all the preceding ſcriptures, I flatter myſelf Hon. Sir, you will perceive that as the redemption of Chriſt is general, ſo there is a general goſpel, which is more or leſs clearly revealed to all, according to the clearer or more obſcure diſpenſation, which they are outwardly under.

This doctrine may appear ſtrange to thoſe who call nothing goſpel but the laſt diſpenſation of it. Such ſhould remember that as a little ſeed ſown in the ſpring is one with the large plant into which it expands in ſummer; ſo the goſpel in its leaſt appearance, is one with the goſpel grown up to full maturity. Our Lord conſidering it both as ſown in man's heart, and ſown in the world, ſpeaks of it under the name of *the kingdom of heaven*, compares it to corn, and conſiders firſt the *ſeed*, then *the blade*, next *the ear*, and laſt of all *the full corn in the ear.*

(1.) The goſpel was ſown in the world as a *little* but general *ſeed*, when God began to quicken mankind in Adam, by the precious promiſe of a Saviour; and when *he ſaid to Noah*, the ſecond general parent of men, *With thee will I eſtabliſh my covenant; bleſſing him and his ſons* after the deluge.

(2.) The

(2.) The gospel appeared as corn in *the blade*, when God renewed the promise of the Messiah to Abraham with this addition, that though the Redeemer should be born of his elect family, divine grace and mercy were too *free* to be confined within the narrow bounds of a peculiar election: therefore *in his seed, that is, in Christ the sun of righteousness* ALL *the families of the earth should be blessed*; as they are all cheared with the genial influence of the natural sun, whether he shines above or below their horizon, whether he particularly enlightens the one or the other hemisphere.

(3.) The gospel *word grew* much in the days of Moses, Samuel and Isaiah; for *the gospel*, says St. Paul, *was preached unto them as well as unto us*, though not so explicitly. But when John the Baptist a *greater prophet* than they all, *began to preach the gospel of repentance*, and point sinners to *the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world*, then the *ear* crowned the blade which had long been at a stand, and even seemed to be blasted.

(4.) The great Luminary of the Church shining warm upon the earth; his direct beams caused a rapid growth. The favonian breathings and sighs which attended his preaching and prayers, the genial dews which distilled on Gethsemane, during his agony, the fruitful showers which descended on Calvary, while the blackest storm of divine wrath rent the rocks around, and the transcendent radiance of our sun, rising after this dreadful eclipse to his meridian glory;—all concurred to minister fertile influences to *the plant of renown*. And on the day of pentecost, when *power came from on high*, when the fire of the Holy Ghost seconded the virtue of the Redeemer's blood, *the full corn* was seen *in the* mystical *ear*; the most perfect of the gospel dispensations came to maturity; and Christians began to bring forth fruit unto the perfection of their own œconomy.

As some good men overlook the gradual dis-

plays

plays of *the manifold gospel-grace of God*, so others, I fear, mistake the essence of the gospel itself. Few say, with St. Paul, *the gospel of which I am not ashamed, is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth with the heart unto righteousness*, according to the light of his dispensation: and many are afraid of his catholic doctrine, when he sums up the general everlasting gospel in these words: *God was not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also; because that which may be known of God*, under their dispensation, *is manifest in them, God having shewed it unto them. For the grace of God, which bringeth salvation* or rather η χαρις η σωτηριος, *the grace emphatically saving, hath appeared unto all men; teaching us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, justly and godly in this present world.*

"But how does this *saving grace teach us?*" By proposing to us the saving truths of our dispensation, and *helping our unbelief*, that we may cordially embrace them; for *without faith it is impossible to please God.* Even the Heathens *who come to God must* BELIEVE *that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him: for there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, the same Lord over all being rich unto all them that call upon him.*

Here the Apostle starts the great Calvinian objection: *But how shall they believe, and call on him of whom they have not heard*, &c? And having observed that the Jews had heard, though few had believed, he says, *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*, which *is nigh, even in the mouth and in the heart* of all who receive the *truth* revealed under their dispensation. Then resuming his answer to the Calvinian objection he cries out, *Have not they* (Jews and Greeks) *all heard* preachers, who invite them to *believe that God is* good and powerful, and consequently that *he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him? Yes verily*, replies he, *their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world.*

"If

" If you ask, Who are those general heralds of free-grace, whose sound goes from pole to pole?" The scripture answers with becoming dignity: *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech or language*, no country or kingdom, *where their voice is not heard. Their* instructing *line went through the earth* their vast parish, *and their words to the end of the world* their immense diocese. For *the invisible things of God*, that is, his greatness and wisdom, his goodness and mercy, *his eternal power and godhead are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made* and preserved, *so that* the very Heathens, who do not obey their striking speech, *are without excuse; because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.*

This is the gospel-alphabet, if I may be allowed the expression. The Apostle, like a wise instructor, proceeds upon the plan of this free-grace, when he addressed himself to the Heathens. *We preach unto you*, said he to the Lycaonians, *that ye should turn from these vanities to serve the living God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things therein; who*, even when he *suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, left not himself without witness*; that is, without preachers, according to that saying of our Lord to his disciples, *Ye shall be my witnesses*, and *teach all nations.* And these witnesses were the *good*, which *God did*, the *rain he gave us from heaven, fruitful seasons*, and the *food and gladness, with which he filled our hearts.*

St. Paul preached the same gospel to the Athenians, wisely coming down to the level of their inferior dispensation. *The God that made the world dwells not*, like a statue, *in temples made with hands, nor hath he need of any thing; seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. He hath made of one blood all nations of men, who dwell on all the face of the earth*, not that they might live like Atheists,

and perish like reprobates, but *that they might seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him.* Nor is this an impossibility, as *he is not far from every one of us, for in him we live, and move, and have our being, as certain of your own poets* have taught, justly asserting that *we are the offspring of God.* Hence he proceeds to declare, that *God calls all men every where to repent,* intimating that upon their turning to him, he will receive them as his dear children, and bless them as his beloved *offspring.*

These, and the like scriptures forced Calvin himself into a happy inconsistency with Calvinism. "The Lord, says he in an epistle prefixed to the French New Testament, never left himself without a witness, even towards them unto whom he has not sent any knowledge of his word. Forasmuch as all creatures, from the firmament to the center of the earth, might be witnesses and messengers of his glory unto all men, to draw them to seek him; and indeed there is no need to seek him very far, for every one might find him in his own self."

And no doubt some have; for although *the world knew not God by* the *wisdom* that *is earthly, sensual and devilish*; yet many have savingly known him by his general witnesses, that is, *the wonderful works that he doth for the children of men*; for *that which may be known of God,* in the lowest œconomy of gospel grace, *is manifest in them,* as well as *shewn unto them.*

"What! Is there something of God inwardly *manifest in,* as well as outwardly shewn *to* all men?" Undoubtedly; the grace of God is as *the wind,* which *bloweth where it listeth*; and *it listeth* to blow with more or less force successively all over the earth. You can as soon meet with a man that never felt the wind, or *heard the sound thereof,* as with one that never felt the divine breathing, or heard *the still small voice,* which we call the grace of God, and which bids us turn from sin to righteousness. To suppose the Lord gives

gives us a thousand tokens of *his eternal power and godhead*, without giving us a capacity to consider, and grace to improve them, is not less absurd than to imagine that when he bestowed upon Adam all the trees of paradise for food, he gave him no eyes to see, no hands to gather, and no mouth to eat their delicious fruits.

We readily grant that Adam, and we in him, lost all by the fall; but Christ, *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, Christ *the repairer of the breach*, mightier to save than Adam to destroy, solemnly *gave himself* to Adam, and to us in him, by the free everlasting gospel which he preached in paradise. And when he preached it he undoubtedly gave Adam, and us in him, a capacity to receive it, that is a power to believe and repent: If he had not, he might as well have preached to stocks and stones, to beasts and devils. It is offering an insult to *the only wise God*, to suppose that he gave mankind the light, without giving them eyes to behold it; or which is the same, to suppose that he gave them the gospel, without giving them power to believe it.

As it is with Adam, so it is undoubtedly with all his posterity. By what argument or scripture will you prove, that God excluded part of Adam (or what is the same thing, part of his offspring, which was then part of his very person) from the promise and gift which he freely made him of *the seed of the woman, and the bruiser of the serpent's head!* Is it reasonable to deny the *gift*, because multitudes of infidels reject it; and thousands of Antinomians abuse it? May not a bounty be really given by a charitable person, though it is despised by a proud, or squandered by a loose beggar?

Waving the case of infants, and those idiots who have not *sinned the sin unto death*, was there ever a sinner under no obligation to repent and believe in a merciful God? O ye opposers of *free grace*, search the universe with Calvin's candle, and among your reprobated millions, find

out the perſon that never had a merciful God: and ſhew us the unfortunate creature, whom a ſovereign God bound over to abſolute deſpair of his mercy from the womb. If there is no ſuch perſon in the world: if all men are bound to repent and believe in a merciful God, there is an end of Calviniſm. An unprejudiced man can require no ſtronger proof that all are redeemed from the curſe of the adamic law, which admitted of no repentance; and that the covenant of grace which admits of, and makes proviſion for it, freely extends to all mankind.

Out of Chriſt's fulneſs all have received grace, a *little leaven* of ſaving power, an inward monitor, a divine reprover, a ray of *true* heavenly *light*, which manifeſts firſt moral, and then ſpiritual good and evil. St. John *bears witneſs of that light*, and declares *it was* the ſpiritual *life of men, the true light, which enlighteneth* not only *every man* that comes into the Church, but *every man that cometh into the world*—without excepting thoſe who are yet *in darkneſs. For the light ſhineth in darkneſs*, even when *the darkneſs comprehends it not.* The Baptiſt bore alſo *witneſs of that light, that all men thro' it*, not thro' him, *might believe*, (φως *light* being the laſt antecedent and agreeing perfectly with δι αὐτ.)

Hence appears the ſufficiency of that divine light to make *all men believe* in Chriſt *the light of the world*; according to Chriſt's own words to the Jews, *While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.—Walk while ye have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon you*, even that total *night* of nature *when no man can work.*

Thoſe who reſiſt this internal light generally reject the external goſpel, or receive it only in the letter and hiſtory: and too many ſuch there have been in all ages; for *Chriſt was in the world*, even when *the world knew him not:* therefore he *was manifeſt in the fleſh.* The ſame ſun which had ſhined as the dawn, *aroſe with healing in his wings*, and came to deliver *the truth* which was *held in unrighteouſneſs*, and to help the *light* which was

not

not comprehended by the darkneſs. But alas! when *he came to his own, even then his own received him not.* Why? Becauſe they were reprobates? No: but becauſe they were moral agents.

This is the condemnation, ſays he himſelf, *that light came into the* WORLD, *but* MEN ſhut their eyes againſt it. They *loved darkneſs rather than light*, BECAUSE *their works were evil.* They would go on in the ſins which the light reproved, and therefore they oppoſed it till it was *quenched*, that is, till it totally withdrew from their hearts. To the ſame purpoſe our Lord ſays, *The heart of this people is waxed groſs, their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they cloſed* againſt the light, *leſt they ſhould ſee with their eyes, and underſtand with their hearts, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them.* The ſame unerring teacher informs us, that *the devil cometh* to the *way-ſide hearers, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, leſt they ſhould believe and be ſaved.* And *if our goſpel is hid*, ſays St. Paul, *it is to them that believe not, and are loſt, whoſe minds the God of this world hath blinded, leſt the glorious goſpel of Chriſt ſhould ſhine unto them.*

From theſe ſcriptures it is evident that Calvin was miſtaken, or that the devil is a fool. For if a man is now totally blind, why ſhould the devil beſtir himſelf to *blind him.* And why ſhould he fear *leſt the goſpel ſhould ſhine to them that are loſt.* if there is abſolutely no goſpel for them, or they have no eyes to ſee, no capacity to receive it?

Whether ſinners *know* their goſpel day or not, they have one. Read the hiſtory of Cain, who is ſuppoſed to be the firſt reprobate; and ſee how graciouſly the Lord expoſtulated with him. Conſider *the old world:* St. Peter ſpeaking of them ſays, *The goſpel was preached to them alſo that are dead:* for *Chriſt went by the Spirit and preached* even to thoſe *who were diſobedient, when once the long-ſuffering of God waited 120 years in the days of Noah.* Nor did the Lord *wait* with an intention of having them completely fattened for the day of ſlaughter:

far be the unbecoming thought from those who worship the God of love! Instead of entertaining it, let us *account* that *the long-suffering of our Lord is* SALVATION, that is, a beginning of salvation, and a sure pledge of it: if we *know and redeem the accepted time: for the Lord is long-suffering to us ward, and not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

Nor does God's *long-suffering* extend to the *elect* only. It embraces also those *who treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath*, by *despising the riches of divine goodness and forbearance and* LONG-SUFFERING, *not knowing that the goodness of God leads them to repentance.* Of this the Jews are a remarkable instance. *What could* God *have done more to his* Jewish *vineyard? He gathered the stones of it, and planted it with the choicest vine; and yet when* HE LOOKED *that it should have brought forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes;* when *he sent his servants to receive the fruits, they were abused and sent away empty.* Hence it is evident that the Jews had a day, in which they could have brought forth fruit, or the *wise God* would no more have *looked for it*, than a wise man expects to see the pine-apple grow upon the haw-thorn.

Nay, the most obstinate, pharisaic, and bloody of the Jews had a day, in which our Lord in person, *would have gathered them* with as much tenderness, as a *hen gathers her brood under her wings.* And when he saw their free-agency, absolutely set against his loving-kindness, *he wept over them*, and deplored their not having *known the things belonging unto their peace*, before *they were hid from their eyes.*

Our gracious God freely gives one or more talents of grace to every man: nor was ever any man *cast into outer darkness where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*, but for the not using his talent aright, as our Lord sufficiently declares, Matt. xxv. 30. Alluding to that important parable, I would observe, that the Christian has five talents, the Jew two, and the Heathen one. If he that has two talents lays them out to advantage, he shall

ſhall *receive a reward* as well as he that has five: and the one talent is as capable of a proportionable improvement as the two or the five. The *equality of God's ways* does not conſiſt in giving juſt the ſame number of gracious talents to all; but firſt in not deſiring to *gather where he has not ſtrawed*, or *to reap* above a proportion of *his ſeed*; and (2.) in graciouſly diſpenſing rewards according to the number of talents improved, and the degrees of that improvement: (and in juſtly inflicting puniſhments, according to the number of talents bury'd) and the aggravations attending their unfaithfulneſs. *For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required, and to whom men have committed much, of him they will aſk the more.*

We frequently ſpeak of God's ſecret decrees, the knowledge of which is as uſeleſs as it is uncertain; but ſeldom conſider that ſolemn decree *ſo often* revealed in the goſpel, *To him that has* grace to purpoſe, more *ſhall be given: and from him that has not*, that has buried his talent, and therefore in one ſenſe *has it not, ſhall be taken away even that which he hath* to no purpoſe: according to our Lord's awful command, *Take the talent from him* that hath buried it, and *give it to him that hath ten, for the good and the faithful ſervant ſhall have abundance.* † He who ſays, *Whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap*, is too juſt to look for an increaſe from thoſe on whom he beſtows no talent; and as he calls for repentance and faith, and for a daily increaſe of both, he has certainly beſtowed upon us the ſeed of both, for he *gives ſeed to the ſower, and* does not deſire *to reap where he has not ſown.*

Methinks my honoured opponent crys out with amazement: What! have all men power to repent and believe? And in the mean time a Benedictine monk comes up to vouch that this doctrine is rank Pelagianiſm. But permit me to obſerve, that if Pelagius

† I muſt do the Calviniſts the juſtice to obſerve, that as our Lord ſays, *aſk and have*; ſo Eliſha Coles ſays, *uſe grace and have grace*, which is all that we contend for, if the inſeparable counterpart of the axiom is admitted, "abuſe grace and loſe grace."

Pelagius had acknowledged as we do the total fall of man, and aſcribe with us to the free grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt, all the power we have to repent and believe, none of the Fathers would have been ſo injudicious and uncharitable as to rank him among heretics. We maintain that altho without Chriſt we can do nothing, yet ſo long as *the day of ſalvation* laſts, all men, *the chief of ſinners* not excepted, can, thro' his free preventing grace, *ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well*, and uſe thoſe means which will infallibly end in the repentance, and faith pecular to the diſpenſation they are under, whether it be that of the Heathens, Jews or Chriſtians.

If the author of Pietas Oxonienſis, and father Walſh deny this, they might as well charge Chriſt with the abſurdity of *taſting death for every man* in order to keep moſt men from the very poſſibility of being benefited by his death. They might as well aſſert that altho' *the free gift came upon* ALL *men*, yet it never came upon a vaſt majority of them; and openly maintain that Chriſt deſerves to be called the *deſtroyer* rather than the *Saviour of the world*. For if the greateſt part of mankind may be conſidered as *the world*, if repentance and faith are abſolutely impoſſible to them, and Jeſus came to denounce deſtruction to all who do not repent and believe, let every thinking man ſay whether he might not be called with greater propriety the *Deſtroyer* than the *Saviour of the world*: and whether preaching the Criſpian goſpel, is not like reading the warrant of *inevitable damnation* to millions of wretched creatures. But upon the ſcheme of what you call the "Weſlean orthodoxy," *Chriſt is* really *the Saviour of all men, but eſpecially of them that believe*: for he indulges all with *a day of ſalvation*, and if none but believers make a proper uſe of it, the fault is not in his partiality, but in their own obſtinacy.

In what a pitiful light does your ſcheme place our Lord! why did he *marvel at the unbelief of the Jews*, if they could no more believe than a ſtone can

can ſwim ? And ſay not that he marvelled " as a man," for the aſſertion abſolutely *unmans* him, What *man* ever wondered that an aſs does not bray with the nightingale's melodious voice? Nay, what *child* ever marvelled that the ox does not fly above the clouds with the ſoaring eagle ?

The ſame obſervation holds with regard to repentance. *Then he began*, ſays St. Matthew, *to upbraid the cities wherein moſt of his mighty works were done*, BECAUSE *they repented not.* Merciful Saviour forgive us ! We have inſulted thy meek wiſdom, by repreſenting thee as cruelly upbraiding the lame for not running, the blind for not ſeeing, and the dumb for not ſpeaking !

But this is not all, if Capernaum could not *have repented at* our Lord's preaching, as well as Nineveh at *the preaching of Jonas*; how do we reflect upon his mild equity, and adorable goodneſs, when we repreſent him as pronouncing woe upon woe over the impenitent city, and threatening to ſink it into a deeper hell than Sodom BECAUSE *it repented not !* And how ill does it become us to exclaim againſt Deiſts for robbing Chriſt of his *divinity*, when we ourſelves diveſt him of common *humanity !*

Suppoſe a ſchool-maſter ſaid to his Engliſh ſcholars, " Except you inſtantly ſpeak Greek you ſhall all be ſeverely whipped," you would wonder at the injuſtice of the ſchool-tyrant. But would not the wretch be merciful, in compariſon of a Saviour, (ſo called) who is ſuppoſed to ſay to myriads of men that can no more repent than ice can burn, *Except ye repent ye ſhall all periſh ?* I confeſs then when I ſee real Proteſtants calling this doctrine "the pure goſpel," and extolling it as " free grace," I no more wonder that real Papiſts ſhould call their bloody inquiſition *the houſe of mercy*, and their burning of thoſe whom they call Heretics an * *auto de fe.*

Obj. At this rate, our ſalvation or damnation turns upon the good or bad uſe which we make of the

* An Act of faith.

the manifold grace of God! And we are in this world in a ſtate of probation, and not merely upon our paſſage to the rewards which everlaſting love, or to the puniſhments which everlaſting hatred has *freely* allotted us from the foundation of the world!

Anſ. Undoubtedly: for what man of ſenſe (I except thoſe who thro' hurry and miſtake have put on the veil of prejudice) could ſhew his face in a pulpit, to exhort a multitude of reprobates to avoid a damnation abſolutely unavoidable; and invite a little flock of elect, to loſe no time in *making ſure* an *election*, ſurer than the pillars of heaven?

Again, who but a tyrant will make the life of his ſubjects turn upon a thing that is not at all at their option? When Nero was determined to put people to death, had he not humanity and honeſty enough not to tantalize them with inſulting offers of life? To whom did he ever ſay, "If thou pluckeſt one ſtar from heaven thou ſhalt not die; but if thou faileſt in the attempt, the moſt dreadful and lingering torments ſhall puniſh thy obſtinacy?" And ſhall I, ſhall my Chriſtian brethren, repreſent the King of ſaints as guilty of——what my pen refuſes to write, that which Nero himſelf was too merciful to contrive?

Obj. "You do not ſtate the caſe fairly. If *all have ſinned in Adam*, and *the wages of ſin is death*, God did the reprobates no wrong when he condemned them to eternal torments, before they knew their right hand from their left; yea, before the foundation of the world."

Anſ. The plauſibility of this objection, heightened by *voluntary humility*, has miſled thouſands of pious ſouls; God give them underſtanding to weigh the following reflections. (1.) If an unconditional abſolute decree of damnation paſſed upon the reprobates BEFORE *the foundation of the world;* it is abſurd to account for the juſtice of ſuch a decree, by appealing to a ſin committed AFTER *the foundation of the world.*

(2.) If

(2.) If Adam ſinned neceſſarily according to the *ſecret will* and *purpoſe of God*, as you intimate in your 4th letter, many do not ſee how he, much leſs his poſterity, could juſtly be condemned to eternal torments for doing an iniquity which *God's hand and counſel determined before to be done.*

(3.) As we ſinned only *ſeminally*, in Adam, if God had not intended our redemption, his goodneſs would have engaged him to deſtroy us *ſeminally* by cruſhing the capital offender who contained us all: ſo there would have been a juſt proportion between the ſin, and the puniſhment; for as we ſinned in Adam without the leaſt conſciouſneſs of *guilt*, ſo in him we ſhould have been puniſhed without the leaſt conſciouſneſs of *pain*. This obſervation may be illuſtrated by an example. If I catch a miſchievous animal, a viper for inſtance, I have undoubtedly a right to kill her, and deſtroy her dangerous brood, if ſhe is big with young. But inſtead of diſpatching her as ſoon as I can, I feed her on purpoſe to get many broods from her, and torment to death millions of her offspring, I can hardly paſs for the *good man who regards the life of a beaſt*. Leaving to you the application of this ſimile, I aſk: Do we honour God when we break the equal beams of his perfections; when we blacken his goodneſs and mercy, in order to make his juſtice and greatneſs ſhine with exorbitant luſtre? If "a God all mercy is a God unjuſt," may not we ſay, according to the rule of proportion, that "a God all juſtice is a God unkind," and can never be he *whoſe mercy is over all his works?*

(5.) But the moment we allow that the bleſſing of the ſecond Adam is as general as the curſe of the firſt: that God *ſets* again *life and death before* every individual, and that he mercifully reſtores to all a capacity of *chuſing life*, yea and of *having it one day more abundantly* than Adam himſelf had before the fall, we ſee his goodneſs and juſtice ſhine with equal radiance, when he ſpares guilty Adam to propagate the fallen race, that they may ſhare the

the blessings of *a better covenant*. For, according to the Adamic law, *judgement was by one* sin *to condemnation ; but the free gift* of the gospel *is of many offences to justification. For if thro' the offence of one the many be dead ; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto the many.*

6.) Rational and scriptural as the preceding observations are, we could spare them, and answer your objection thus. You think God may justly decree, that millions of his unborn creatures shall be *vessels of wrath* to all eternity, overflowing with the vengeance due to Adam's pre-ordained sin ; but you are not nearer the mark : for, granting that he could do it as a just, good, and merciful God ; yet he cannot do it as the God of *faithfulness and truth*. His *word* and *oath* are gone forth together : hear both. *What mean ye that ye use this proverb ? "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the childrens' teeth are set on edge : As* I LIVE, *says the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb. The soul that sinneth* personally, *it shall die* eternally, *Every one shall die for his own* avoidable *iniquity. Every man that eateth sour grapes,* when he might have eaten the sweet, *his teeth shall* justly *be set on edge.* When God has thus made oath of his equity and impartiality before mankind, it is rather bold to charge him with contriving Calvin's election, and setting up the Protestant Madona, the great image before which a considerable part of the church continually falls down and worships.

O ye honest Shadrachs, who gaze upon it with admiration, see how some Calvinian doctors deify it, *Decreta Dei sunt ipse Deus, The decrees of God are God himself.* See Elisha Coles advancing at the head of thousands of his admirers, and hear how he exhorts them to worship : *Let us make election our all ; our bread, water, munition of rocks, and whatever else we can suppose to want,* that is, Let us make the great image our God. Ye candid Meshechs, ye considerate Abednegos, follow not this mistaken multitude ; before you cry with them,

" *Great*

"*Great is the Diana of the* Calviniſt!" walk once around the celebrated image: and I am perſuaded that if you can make out *Free Grace* written in running hand upon her ſmiling face, you will ſee FREE WRATH written in black capitals upon her deformed back; and then, far from being angry at the liberty I take to expoſe her, you will wiſh ſpeed to the *little ſtone* which I level at her *iron-clay feet*.

Think not, honoured Sir, that I ſay about *free-wrath*, what I cannot poſſibly prove: for you help me yourſelf to a ſtriking demonſtration. I ſuppoſe you ſtill upon your travels. You come to the borders of a great empire, and the firſt thing that ſtrikes you, is a man in an eaſy carriage going with folded arms to take poſſeſſion of an immenſe eſtate freely given him by the king of the country. As he flies along you juſt make out the motto of the royal chariot, in which he doſes, FREE REWARD. Soon after you meet five of the king's carts, containing twenty wretches loaded with irons: and the motto of every cart is FREE PUNISHMENT. You enquire into the meaning of this extraordinary proceſſion and the ſheriff attending the execution anſwers; Know, curious ſtranger, that our Monarch is *abſolute*; and to ſhew that *ſovereignty* is the prerogative of his imperial crown, and that he is *no reſpecter of perſons*, he diſtributes every day FREE *rewards and* FREE *puniſhments*, to a certain number of his ſubjects.—"What! without any regard to merit or demerit, by mere caprice!"—Nor altogether ſo, for *he pitches upon the* WORST *of men, and chief of ſinners, and upon ſuch to* CHOOSE, for the ſubjects of his rewards. (Eliſha Coles, page 62) And that his puniſhments may do as much honour to *free* ſovereign *wrath*, as his bounty does to *free* ſovereign *grace*, he pitches upon thoſe that ſhall be executed before they are born.—"What! have theſe poor creatures in chains done no harm?" O yes, ſays the ſheriff, the king contrived that their parents ſhould let them fall, and break their legs before

they had any knowledge; when they came to years of diſcretion he commanded them to run a race with broken legs, and becauſe they cannot do it, I am going to ſee them quartered. Some of them beſides this have been obliged to fulfil the king's *ſecret will, and bring about his purpoſes*; and they ſhall be burned in yonder deep valley called *Topket*, for their trouble.—You are ſhocked at the ſheriff's account, and begin to expoſtulate with him about the *freeneſs* of the *wrath* which burns a man for doing the king's will: but all the anſwer you can get from him is that which you give me in your 4th letter, page 23, where ſpeaking of a poor reprobate you ſay, *Such an one is indeed accompliſhing* the king's, you ſay *God's decree, but he carries a dreadful mark in his forehead, that ſuch a decree, is, that he ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord* of the country. You cry out, "God deliver me from the hands of a monarch, who *puniſhes with everlaſting deſtruction ſuch as accompliſh his decree!*" and while the magiſtrate intimates that your exclamation is *a dreadful mark* if not *in your forehead*, at leaſt upon your tongue, that you yourſelf, ſhall be apprehended againſt the next execution, and made a public inſtance of the king's *free wrath*, your blood runs cold, you bid the poſtillion turn the horſes; they gallop for your life, and the moment you get out of the dreary land, you bleſs God for your narrow eſcape.

May reaſon and ſcripture draw your ſoul with equal ſpeed from the diſmal fields of Cole's ſovereignty, to the ſmiling plains of primitive Chriſtianity. Here you have God's *election* without Calvin's *reprobation*. Here Chriſt chuſes the Jews without rejecting the Gentiles, and elects Peter, James and John to the enjoyment of peculiar privileges, without reprobating Mathew, Thomas and Simon. Here no body is damned for not doing impoſſibilities, or for doing what he could not poſſibly help. Here all that are ſaved enjoy rewards thro' the merits of Chriſt, according to the

degrees

degrees, of evangelical obedience which the Lord enables, not forces, them to perform. Here *free wrath* never appeared: all our damnation is of ourſelves, when we *neglect ſuch great ſalvation*, by obſtinately refuſing to *work it out with fear and trembling*. But this is not all, here *free grace* does not rejoice over *ſtocks* but over *men*, who gladly confeſs that their ſalvation is all of God, who for Chriſt's ſake rectifies their free-agency, helps their infirmities, and *works in* them *both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*. And from the tenor of the ſcripture, as well as from the conſent of all nations, and the dictates of conſcience, it appears that part of *God's good pleaſure* towards man is, that he ſhall remain inveſted with the awful power of *chuſing life or death*, that his will ſhall never be *forced*, and conſequently that overbearing, irreſiſtible grace ſhall be baniſhed to the land of Cole's ſovereignty, together with free, abſolute, unavoidable wrath.

Now, honoured Sir, permit me to aſk, Why does this doctrine alarm good men? Why are thoſe divines deemed hereticks who dare not diveſt God of his eſſential love, Emmanuel of his compaſſionate humanity, and man of his connatural free-agency? What are Dominicus and Calvin, when weighed in the balance againſt Moſes and Jeſus Chriſt? Hear the great Prophet of the Jews: *I call heaven and earth to record this day againſt you, that I have ſet before you life and death, bleſſing and curſing*, heaven and hell; *therefore chuſe life that ye may live.* And *he that hath ears* not yet abſolutely ſtopped by prejudice, *let him hear* what the great prophet of the Chriſtians ſays upon the important queſtion. *I am come that they might have life—all things are now ready—but ye will not come unto me that ye might have life—I would have gathered you and ye would not.—Becauſe I have called and ye refuſed, I will laugh when your deſtruction cometh.* FOR THAT *they did not* CHUSE *the fear of the Lord*, THEREFORE *ſhall they eat*, not *the fruit* of my decree or of Adam's ſin, but *of their own* per-

verſe *way : they ſhall be filled with their own doings.*

If theſe words of Moſes and Jeſus Chriſt are overlooked, ſhould not at leaſt the experience of near ſix thouſand years teach the world that God does not *force* rational beings, and that when he tries their loyalty, he does not obey for them, but gives them *ſufficient* grace to obey for themſelves? Had not all the angels ſufficient grace to obey? If ſome kept not their firſt eſtate, was it not thro' their own unfaithfulneſs? What evil has our Creator done us, or what ſervice have devils rendered us, that we ſhould fix the blot of Calvinian reprobation upon the former, to excuſe the rebellion of the latter? Did not Adam and Eve ſtand ſome time by means of God's ſufficient grace, and might they not have ſtood for ever? Have not unconverted men ſufficient grace to forſake or complain of ſome evil? To perform, or attempt ſome good? Had not David ſufficient grace to avoid the crimes into which he plunged? Have not believers ſufficient power to do more good than they do? And does not the ſcripture addreſs ſinners (Simon Magus not accepted) as having ſufficient grace to pray for more grace, if they have not yet ſinned the ſin unto death?

In oppoſition to the above-ſtated doctrine of *grace free* FOR *all*, as well as, *free* IN *all*, our Calvinian brethren aſſert that God binds his *free-grace*, and keeps it from viſiting millions of ſinners whom they call reprobates.—They teach that man is not in a ſtate of probation, that his lot is abſolutely caſt, a certain little number of ſouls being immoveably fixed in God's favour, in the midſt of all their abominations; and a certain vaſt number under his eternal wrath, in the midſt of their moſt ſincere endeavours to ſecure his favour. And their teachers maintain that the names of the former were *written in the book of life*, without any reſpect to foreſeen repentance, faith and obedience; while the names of the latter were put in the book of death, (ſo I call the decree of reprobation) merely for the ſin of Adam, without any regard

regard to perſonal impenitency, unbelief and diſobedience. And this *narrow grace* and *free wrath* they recommend to the world under the engaging name of *free grace*.

This doctrine, dear Sir, we are in conſcience bound to oppoſe, not only becauſe it is the reverſe of the other, which is both ſcriptural and rational; but becauſe it is inſeparably connected with doctrinal Antinomianiſm, as your fourth letter abundantly demonſtrates: and above all, becauſe it appears to us that it fixes a blot upon all the divine perfections. Pleaſe, honoured Sir, to conſider the following queries.

What becomes of God's *goodneſs*, if the tokens of it which he gives to millions are only intended to inhance their ruin, or caſt a deceitful veil over his everlaſting wrath?—What of his *mercy* which *is over* ALL *his works*, if millions were ever excluded from the leaſt intereſt in it, by an *abſolute* decree that conſtitutes them veſſels of wrath from all eternity?——What becomes of his *juſtice*, if he ſentences myriads upon myriads to everlaſting fire, BECAUSE *they have not believed on the name of his only begotten Son*; when, if they had believed that he was their *Jeſus*, their Saviour, they would have believed a monſtrous lie, and claimed what they have no more right to than I have to the crown of England?—What of his *veracity*, and the *oath he ſwears* that he *willeth not the death of a ſinner*; if he never affords moſt ſinners ſufficient means of eſcaping eternal death? If he ſends his ambaſſadors to *every creature*, declaring that *all things are now ready* for their ſalvation, when nothing but *Tophet is prepared of old* for the inevitable deſtruction of a vaſt majority of them?—What becomes of his *holineſs*, if in order to condemn the reprobates with ſome ſhow of juſtice, and ſecure *the end* of his decree of reprobation, which is that "millions ſhall abſolutely be damned," he abſolutely fixes *the means* of their damnation, that is, their ſins and wickedneſs?—What of his *wiſdom* if he ſeriouſly expoſtulates with ſouls as dead as corpſes,

and gravely urges to repentance and faith perſons that can no more repent and believe, than fiſhes can ſpeak and ſing? What becomes of his *long-ſuffering*, if he *waits* to have an opportunity of ſending the reprobates into a deeper hell, and not to give them a longer time to *ſave themſelves from this perverſe generation?*—What of his *equity*, if there was mercy for Adam and Eve, who *perſonally* breaking the edge of duty; wantonly ruſhed out of paradiſe into this howling wilderneſs; and yet there is no mercy for millions of their unfortunate children, who are born in a ſtate of ſin and miſery without any *perſonal* choice, and conſequently without any *perſonal* ſin?——And what becomes of his *omniſcience*, if he cannot foreknow future contingencies? If to foretel without a miſtake that ſuch a thing ſhall happen, he muſt do it himſelf? Was not Nero as wiſe in this reſpect? Could not he foretel that Phebe ſhould not continue a virgin, when he was bent upon raviſhing her? That Seneca ſhould not die a natural death, when he had determined to have him murdered? And that Criſpus ſhould fall into a pit, if he obliged him to run a race at midnight in a place full of pits? And what old woman in the kingdom cannot preciſely foretel that a ſilly tale ſhall be told at ſuch an hour, if ſhe is reſolved to tell it herſelf, or at any rate to engage a child to do it for her?

Again, What becomes of God's *loving-kindneſſes, which have been ever of old towards the children of men?* And what of his *impartiality*, if moſt men, abſolutely reprobated for the ſin of Adam, are never placed in a ſtate of perſonal trial and probation? Does not God uſe them far leſs kindly than devils, who were tried every one for himſelf, and remain in their diabolical ſtate, becauſe they brought it upon themſelves by a *perſonal* choice? Aſtoniſhing! That the Son of God ſhould have been fleſh of the fleſh, and bone of the bone of millions of men, whom, upon the Calvinian ſcheme, he never indulged ſo far as he did devils! What a hard-hearted relation to myriads of his fellow-

fellow-men, does Calvin repreſent our Lord? Suppoſe Satan had become our *kinſman* by incarnation, and had by that means got *the right of redemption:* would he not have acted like himſelf, if he had not only left the majority of them in the depth of the fall, but enhanced their miſery by the ſight of his partiality to the little flock of the elect?

Once more, What becomes of *fair dealing*, if God every where repreſents ſin as the dreadful evil which cauſes damnation, and yet the moſt horrid ſins *work for good* to ſome, and as you intimate "accompliſh their ſalvation thro' Chriſt?" —And what of *honeſty*, if the God of truth himſelf promiſes that *all the families of the earth ſhall be bleſſed in Chriſt*, when he has curſed a vaſt majority of them, with a decree of abſolute reprobation, which excludes them from obtaining an intereſt in him, even from the foundation of the world?

Nay, what becomes of his *ſovereignty* itſelf, if it is torn from the mild and gracious attributes by which it is tempered? If it is held forth in ſuch a light as renders it more terrible to millions, than the ſovereignty of Nebuchadnezzar in the plain of Dura appeared to Daniel's companions, when *the form of his viſage was changed againſt them*, and he decreed that they ſhould be *caſt into the burning fiery furnace*; for they might have ſaved their bodily life by bowing to the golden image which was a thing in their power; but poor reprobates can eſcape at no rate: the *horrible decree* is gone forth; they muſt, in ſpite of their beſt endeavours, dwell body and ſoul with *everlaſting burnings*.

And let none ſay that we wrong the Calvinian decree of reprobation, when we call it a *horrible decree*, for Calvin himſelf is honeſt enough to call it ſo. "Unde factum eſt, tot gentes, una cum liberis eorum infantibus æternæ morti involveret lapſus Adæ abſque remedio, niſi quia Deo ita viſum eſt?—*Decretum* quidem *horribile*, fateor: inficiare tamen nemo poterit, quin præſciverit Deus quem exitum habiturus eſſet homo, antequam ipſum conderet, et ideo præſciverit quia decreto ſuo ſic ordinarat."

ordinarat." That is, "How comes it to pafs that fo many nations, together with ther infant children, are by the fall of Adam involved in eternal death without remedy, unlefs it is becaufe God would have it fo?—*A horrible decree*, I confefs! Nevertheleſs no-body can deny that God foreknew what would be man's end before he created him, and that he foreknew it becaufe he had ordered it by his decree." Calv. Inſt. Book 3. Chap. 23. Sect. 7.

This is fome of the contempt which Calviniſm pours upon God's perfections: theſe are fome of the blots which it fixes upon his word.—But the moment man is conſidered as a candidate for heaven, a probationer for a bleſsful immortality—the moment you allow him what *free grace* beſtows upon him, that is, *a day of ſalvation*, with *a talent* of living light and rectified free-agency, to enable him to work *for life* faithfully promiſed, as well as *from life* freely imparted—the moment I ſay, you allow this, all the divine perfections ſhine with unſullied luſtre; and as reaſon and majeſty returned to Nebuchadnezzar after his ſhameful degradation, ſo conſiſtency and native dignity are reſtored to the abuſed oracles of God.

Having thus ſhewn the inconſiſtency of Calviniſm, and the reaſonableneſs of what you call the Weſlean, and what we eſteem the Chriſtian orthodoxy, (ſo far at leaſt as it reſpects the gracious power and opportunity that man, as redeemed and prevented by Chriſt, has to "work for life" or to *work out his own ſalvation*) it is but juſt I ſhould conſider ſome of the moſt plauſible objections which are urged againſt our doctrine.

1. Obj. Your Weſlean ſcheme pours more contempt upon the divine perfections than ours. What becomes of God's *wiſdom*, if he gave his Son to die for all mankind, when he foreknew that moſt men would never be benefited by his death?

Anſ. (1.) God foreknew juſt the contrary: all men, even thoſe who periſh, are benefited by Chriſt's death; for all enjoy thro' him *a day of ſalvation*

ſalvation, and a thouſand bleſſings both ſpiritual and temporal; and if all do not enjoy heaven for ever, they may ſtill thank God for his gracious offer, and take the blame upon themſelves for their obſtinate refuſal of it. (2.) God by reinſtating all mankind in a ſtate of probation, for ever ſhuts the mouth of thoſe who *chuſe death in the error of their ways*, and clears himſelf of their blood before men and angels. If he cannot eternally benefit unbelievers, he eternally vindicates his own adorable perfections. He can ſay to the moſt obſtinate of all the reprobates, *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf*; *In me* was *thy help*, but *thou wouldeſt not come unto me that thou mighteſt have life*. Thy deſtruction is not from *my* decree, but *thine own* determination.

2. Obj. If God wills *all men to be ſaved*, and yet many are damned, is he not diſappointed? And does not this diſappointment argue that he wants either wiſdom to contrive the means of ſome mens' ſalvation, or power to execute his gracious deſign?

Anſ. (1.) God's purpoſe is that all men ſhould have ſufficient grace to believe according to their diſpenſation, that *he who believeth ſhall be ſaved*, and *he who believeth not ſhall be damned*. God cannot therefore be diſappointed, even when man's free agency throws in the weight of final unbelief, and turns the ſcale of probation for death. (2.) Altho' Chriſt is the author of *a day of ſalvation* to all, yet he is *the author of eternal ſalvation to* none but to ſuch as *obey him*, by *working out their own ſalvation while it is day*.

If you ſay that "Suppoſe God wills the ſalvation of *all*, and none can be ſaved but the *obedient*, he ſhould *make all* obey:" I reply, So he does, by a variety of gracious means, which perſuade but do not force them; for he ſays himſelf, *What could I have done more to my vineyard than I have done?* "Oh but he ſhould *force* all by the ſovereign power of irreſiſtible grace." You might as well ſay that he ſhould renounce his wiſdom, and defeat his own purpoſe: for if his wiſdom places men

men in a ſtate of probation; the moment he forces them, he takes them out of that ſtate and overturns his own counſel: he deſtroys the work of his hands; he unmans man, and ſaves him not as a rational creature; but as a ſtock or ſtone. Add to this, that *forced obedience* is a contradiction in terms; it is but another word for *diſobedience*, at leaſt in the account of him who ſays, *My ſon, give me thy heart;* obey me with an unconſtrained, free, and chearful will. In a word, this many *are willingly ignorant of*, that when God ſays, he *wills all* MEN *to be ſaved*, he wills them to be ſaved as MEN, according to his own method of ſalvation laid down in the above-mentioned ſcriptures. and not in their own of wilful diſobedience, or after Calvin's ſcheme of irreſiſtible grace.

3. Obj. "You may ſpeak againſt *irreſiſtible* grace, but we are perſuaded that nothing ſhort of it is ſufficient to make us believe; for St. John informs us that the Jews, towards whom it was not exerted, COULD *not believe.*"

Anſ. (1.) Joſeph ſaid to his miſtreſs, *How* CAN *I do this great wickedneſs!* But this does not prove that he was not able to comply with her requeſt if he had been ſo minded. The truth was, that ſome of the Phariſees had *bury'd their talent*, and therefore *could not* improve it; while others had ſo provoked God, that he had *taken it from them;* they had *ſinned unto death.* But moſt of them obſtinately held that evil, which was an inſurmountable hindrance to faith; and to them our Lord ſaid, *How* CAN *ye believe, who receive honour one of another!* (2.) I wonder that modern predeſtinarians ſhould make ſo much of this ſcripture, when St. Auguſtine their father, ſolves the ſeeming difficulty with the utmoſt readineſs. "If you aſk me, ſays he, why the Jews COULD *not believe:* I quickly anſwer, Becauſe they WOULD *not*; for God foreſaw their evil will, and foretold it by the prophet; and if he blinded their eyes, their own wills deſerved this alſo." They obſtinately ſaid "we will not ſee," and God juſtly ſaid at laſt, "Ye *ſhall* not ſee."

4. Obj.

4. Obj. You frequently mention the parable of the *talents*, but take care to say nothing of the parable of *the dry bones*, which shews not only the absurdity of supposing that man can work for life, but the propriety of expostulating with souls as void of all spiritual life, as the *dry bones* to which Ezekiel prophesied.

Ans. If you read that parable without comment, you will see that it is not descriptive of the spiritual state of souls, but of the political condition of the Jews during their captivity in Babylon. They were scattered throughout Chaldea as *dry bones in a valley*; nor was there any human probability of their being collected to form again a political body. Therefore God to chear their desponding hearts, favoured Ezekiel with the vision of the resurrection of the dry bones. (2.) This vision proves just the reverse of what some imagine. For the dry bones are thus described by God himself. *These bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say,* (this was the language of their despairing minds) *our bones are dried, our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts.* Here these Israelites compared to dry bones, even before Ezekiel prophesied, and the Spirit entered into them, knew their misery, and complained of it saying, *Our bones are dried up.* How far then were they from being as insensible as corpses? (3.) The prophecy to the dry bones did not consist in threatnings and exhortations: it was only of the declarative kind. Nor was the promise of their resurrection fulfilled in the Calvinian way, that is *irresistibly.* For altho' God had said, *I will open your graves*, that is, your prisons, *and bring you out of them into your land*; we find that multitudes when their graves were opened, chose to continue in them. For when Nehemiah and Ezra breathed, under God, courage into the dry bones, the Jewish captives dispersed throughout Chaldea, many preferred the land of their captivity to their own land, and refused to return: so that after all, their political resurrection turned upon their own choice.

5. Obj.

5. Obj. We do not altogether go by the parable of the dry bones, when we affirm there is no abſurdity in preaching to ſouls as dead as corpſes. We have the example of our Lord as well as that of Ezekiel. Did he not ſay to Lazarus when he was dead and buryed, *Come forth?*

Anſ. If Chriſt had called Lazarus out of the grave without giving him power to come forth, his friends would have had ſome reaſon to ſuſpect that *he was beſides himſelf.* How much more, if they had heard him call a thouſand corpſes out of their graves, denouncing to all, that if they did not riſe they ſhould be *caſt into a lake of fire*, and eaten up by a *worm that dieth not!* It is a matter of fact that Chriſt never commanded but one dead man to come out of the grave; and the inſtant he gave him the command, he gave him alſo power to obey it. Hence we conclude that as the Lord *commands all men every where to repent*, he gives them all power ſo to do. But ſome Calviniſts argue juſt the reverſe. Chriſt, ſay they, called one corpſe without uſing any intreaty, threatning or promiſe, and he gave it power to obey: therefore when he calls a hundred dead ſouls, and inforces his call with the greateſt variety of expoſtulations, threatnings and promiſes, he gives power to obey only to two or three. What an inference is this! How worthy of the cauſe which it ſupports!

In how contemptible a light does our Lord appear, if he ſays to ſouls as dead as Lazarus in the grave, *All the day long have I ſtretched out my hands unto you. Turn ye: Why will ye die? Let the wicked forſake his way, and I will have mercy upon him: But if he will not turn, I will whet my ſword, I have bent my bow and made it ready; I have alſo prepared for him the inſtruments of death?*

I once ſaw a paſſionate man unmercifully beating and damning a blind horſe, becauſe he did not take to the way in which he would have him go; and I came up juſt when the poor animal fell a lamed victim to its driver's madneſs. How did I upbraid him with his cruelty, and charge him with

with unparalleled extravagance! But I now aſk if it is not more than paralleled by the conduct of the imaginary being, whom ſome recommend to the world as a wiſe and merciful God. For the beſotted driver for ſome minutes expoſtulated in his way with a *living* though blind horſe; but the ſuppoſed maker of the Calvinian decrees expoſtulates *all the day long* with ſouls not only as blind as beetles, but as *dead* as corpſes. Again, the former had ſome hopes of prevailing with his living beaſt to turn; but what hopes can the latter have to prevail with dead corpſes, or with ſouls as dead as they? What man in his ſenſes ever attempted to make a corpſe *turn*, by threatening it *ſword* in hand, or by *bending the bow* and levelling an arrow at its cold and putrid heart?

But ſuppoſe the reſurrection of Lazarus, and that of the dry bones, did not overthrow Calviniſm, would it be reaſonable to lay ſo much ſtreſs upon them? Is a dead ſoul in every reſpect like a dead body; and is *moral* abſolutely like *natural* death? Can a parabolical viſion wreſted from its obvious meaning, ſupercede the plaineſt declarations of Chriſt, who perſonally addreſſes ſinners as free agents? Should not metaphors, compariſons, and parables be ſuffered to walk erect like reaſonable men? Is it right to make them go upon all four like the ſtupid ox? What loads of heterodoxy have degraded parables brought into the church! And how ſucceſsfully has error carried on her trade, by dealing in figurative expreſſions taken in a literal ſenſe!

This is my body, ſays Chriſt. "Therefore bread is fleſh, ſays the Papiſt, and tranſubſtantiation is true."—*Theſe dry bones are the houſe of Iſrael*, ſays the Lord. "Therefore Calviniſm is true, ſays my objector, and we can do no more towards our converſions, than dry bones towards their reſurrection."—*Loſt ſinners* are repreſented in the goſpel as a *loſt piece of ſilver*: Therefore, ſays the author of Pietas Oxonienſis, they can no more ſeek God, than the piece could ſeek the woman who

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had loft it.—*Chrift is the Son of God*, fays St. Peter: "Therefore fays Arius, he is not cœternal with the Father, for I am not fo old as my parents." And I, who have a right to be as wife as any of them, hearing our Lord fay that *the feven churches are feven candlefticks*, prove by it that the feven churches can no more repent than three pair and a half of candlefticks, or if you pleafe, feven pair of fnuffers. And fhall we pretend to overthrow the general tenor of the fcripture by fuch conclufions as thefe! Shall not rather unprejudiced perfons of every denomination, agree to turn fuch arguments out of the Chriftian church, with as much indignation as Chrift turned the oxen out of the Jewifh temple!

Permit me honoured Sir, to give you two or three inftances more, of an undue ftretching of fome particular words, for the fupport of fome Calvinian errors. According to the oriental ftile, a follower of wifdom is called a *fon of wifdom*, and one that deviates from her paths a *fon of folly*. By the fame mode of fpeech, a wicked man, confidered as wicked, is called *Satan, a fon of Belial, a child of the wicked one*, and *a child of the devil*. On the other hand a man who turns from the devil's works, and does the works of God by believing in him, is called *a child*, or *a fon of God*. Hence the paffing from the ways of Satan to the ways of God, was naturally called *converfion* and *new birth*, as implying a turning from fin, a paffing into the family of God, and being numbered among the godly.

Hence fome divines, who, like Nicodemus, carnalize the expreffions of *new birth*, *child of God*, and *fon of God*, affert that if men who once walked in God's ways, turn back even into adultery, murder and inceft, they are ftill *God's dear people* and *pleafant children*, in the gofpel fenfe of the words. They afk, "Can a man be a child of God to-day, and a child of the devil to-morrow? Can he be born this week, and unborn the next?" And with thefe queftions they as much think they have overthrown

thrown the doctrine of holineſs and one half of the bible, as honeſt Nicodemus ſuppoſed he had demoliſhed the doctrine of regeneration, and ſtopped our Lord's mouth, when he ſaid, *Can a man enter a ſecond time into his mother's womb and be born?*

The queſtions of our brethren would be eaſily anſwered, if ſetting aſide the oriential mode of ſpeech, they ſimply aſked, "May one who has *ceaſed to do evil*, and *learned to do well* to-day; ceaſe to do well, and learn to do evil to-morrow?" To this we could directly reply: If the dying thief, the Philippian jailor, and multitudes of Jews, in one day went over from the ſons of folly to the ſons of wiſdom; where is the abſurdity of ſaying they could meaſure the ſame way back again in one day; and draw back into the horrid womb of ſin as eaſily as Satan drew back into rebellion, Adam into diſobedience, David into adultery, Solomon into idolatry, Judas into treaſon, and Ananias and Sapphira into covetouſneſs? When Peter had ſhewn himſelf a *bleſſed* ſon of heavenly wiſdom, by confeſſing Jeſus Chriſt; did he even ſtay till the next day to become a ſon of folly by following the *wiſdom* which *is earthly, ſenſual and deviliſh?* Was not our Lord directly obliged to rebuke him with the utmoſt ſeverity, by ſaying, *Get thee behind me*, SATAN?

Multitudes, who live in open ſin, build their hopes of heaven upon a ſimilar miſtake, I mean upon the unſcriptural idea which they fix to the ſcriptural word *ſheep*. "Once I *heard the ſhepherd's voice*, ſays one of theſe Laodicean ſouls; I *followed him*, and therefore I was one of his *ſheep*; and now, tho' I *follow the voice of a ſtranger* who leads me into all manner of ſins, into adultery and murder, I am undoubtedly a *ſheep* ſtill; for it was never heard that a ſheep became a goat." Such perſons do not obſerve, that our Lord calls ſheep thoſe *who hear his voice*, and goats thoſe who follow that of the tempter. Nor do they conſider that if Saul, a *grievous wolf breathing ſlaughter*

againſt Chriſt's ſheep, and *making havock of his little flock*, could in a ſhort time be changed both into a ſheep and a ſhepherd; David, an harmleſs ſheep, could in as ſhort a time commence a goat with Bathſheba, and prove a wolf in ſheep's cloathing to her huſband.

Pardon me, honoured Sir, if to make my miſtaken brethren aſham'd of their argument, I dedicate to them the following ſoliloquy, wherein I reaſon upon their own plan. "Thoſe very Jews whom the baptiſt and our Lord call'd *a brood of vipers*, and *ſerpents*, were ſoon after compared to *chicken*, which Chriſt wanted *to gather as a hen does her brood*. What a wonderful change was here! The vipers became chickens! Now as it was never heard that chickens became vipers, I conclude that thoſe Jews, even when they came about our Lord like *fat bulls of Baſan*, like *ramping and roaring lions*, were true chickens ſtill. And indeed why ſhould not they have been as true *chickens*, as David was a true *ſheep* when he murdered Uriah? I abhor the doctrine which maintains that a man may be a chick or a ſheep to-day, and a viper or a goat to-morrow."

"But I am a little embarraſs'd. If none go to hell but *goats*, and none to heaven but *ſheep*, where ſhall the *chickens* go? Where the *wolves in ſheep's cloathing?* And in what limbus of heaven or hell ſhall we put *that fox Herod*, the *dogs* who *return to their vomit*, and the *ſwine*, before whom we muſt *not caſt our pearls?* Are they all ſpecies of goats, or ſome particular kind of ſheep?

"My difficulties increaſe. The church is call'd a *dove*, and Ephraim *a ſilly dove?* Shall the *ſilly dove* be admitted among the *ſheep?* Her caſe ſeems rather doubtful. The hair of the ſpouſe in the canticles is likewiſe ſaid to be like *a flock of goats*, and Chriſt's ſhepherds are repreſented as *feeding kids*, or *young goats beſides their tents*. I wonder if thoſe *young goats* became young ſheep, or if they were all doom'd to continue reprobates! But what puzzles me moſt, is that the Babylonians are

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in the same verse compar'd to *lambs*, *rams*, and *goats*: Where these mongrel elect, or mongrel reprobates, or some of Elisha Cole's *spiritual monsters, in whom the spirit had begotten a lump of dead flesh?*"

I make this ridiculous soliloquy to shew the absurdity and danger of resting weighty doctrines upon so sandy a foundation as the particular sense which some good men give to a few scriptural expressions stretched and abused on the rack of my countryman Calvin; especially such expressions as these, *a child of God*, *a sheep*, *a goat*, and above all, the *dead in sin*.

Upon this last expression you seem, honoured Sir, chiefly to place the merit of your cause with respect to "working for life;" witness the following words: "That we are to work for life is an assertion most exceedingly self-contradictory, if it be a truth that man is *dead in trespasses and sins*." Had you given yourself the trouble of reading with any degree of attention the 42d page of the vindication, you would have seen your difficulty propos'd and solv'd: Witness the following words which conclude the solution: "In this scriptural view of free grace, what room is there for the ridiculous cavil, that Mr. W. wants the dead to work for life." Had I been in your place I confess, honoured Sir, I could not have produc'd that cavil again, without attempting at least to wipe off the ridicule put upon it. I should think truth has better weapons to defend herself than *a vail*. I grant that the reverend Divine whose second you are, has publickly *cast a vail* over *all my* arguments, under the name of *mistakes*: but could you possibly think that his vail was thick enough to cover them from the eyes of unprejudic'd readers, and palliate your answering, or seeming to answer me without taking notice of my arguments? But if you cast a vail over them, I shall now endeavour to do your's justice and clear the matter a little farther.

I. Availing yourself of St. Paul's words to the

Ephesians and Colossians, *You hath he quicken'd who were dead in trespasses and sins, and you being dead in your sins hath he quicken'd together with him;* you dwell upon the absurdity of "expecting living actions from a dead corpse," or living works from a dead soul.

(1.) I wonder at the partiality of some persons. If we assert that strong believers are DEAD *to sin*, they tell us very properly that such are not so *dead* but they may commit sin if they please, or if they are off their watch: But if we say that many who are DEAD *in sin*, are not so *dead* but in the strength imparted together with *the light that enlightens every man*, they may leave off some of their sins if they please, we are exclaim'd against as using metaphysical distinctions, and *dead* must absolutely mean impotent as *a corpse*.

(2.) The word *dead*, &c. is frequently used in the scriptures to denote a particular degree of helplessness and inactivity very short of the total helplessness of a corpse. We read of the DEADNESS *of Sarah's womb*, and of *Abraham's body being* DEAD, and he must be a strong Calvinist indeed, who, from such expressions, peremptorily asserts, that Sarah's DEAD *womb* was as unfit for conception, and Abraham's DEAD *body* for generation as if they both had been "DEAD *corpses*." Christ writes to the church of Sardis, *I know thy works*; *thou hast a name to live, and art* DEAD: but it is evident that *dead* as they were, something *remained alive* in them, tho', like the smoking flax, it was *ready to die:* Witness the words that follow, *be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.* Now Sir, if the *dead* Sardians could "work for life," by *strengthning the things* belonging to the Christian which remained in them; is it modest to decide e cathedra, that the *dead* Ephesians and Colossians could not as well work for life by *strengthning the things that remained* and *were ready to die* under THEIR OWN dispensation? Is it not evident that a beam of *the light of the world* still shone in their hearts, or that *the Spirit* still *strove with*

with them? If they had absolutely *quench'd him*, would he have helped them to believe? And if they had not, was not there something of *the light which enlightens every man remaining* in them: with which they both could, and did work for life, as well as the *dead* Sardians?

(3.) The absurdity of always measuring the meaning of the word *dead* by the idea of *a dead corpse*, appears from several other scriptures. St. Paul speaking of one who *grows wanton against Christ*, says, *she that liveth in pleasure is* DEAD *while she liveth.* Now if this means that she is intirely devoid of every degree of spiritual life, what becomes of Calvinism? Suppose all that *live in pleasure* are as *dead* to God as corpses; what became of the *everlasting life* of Lot, when he *lived in pleasure* with his daughters? Of David with Bathsheba, and Solomon with his idolatrous wives? When the same apostle observes to the Romans that their *body* was DEAD *because of sin*, did he really mean they were already *dead* corpses? And when he adds, *sin revived and I* DIED, did Calvinian death really pass upon him? Dead as he was, could not he complain like the *dry bones*, and ask, *who shall deliver me from this body of death?* Again, when our Lord says to Martha, *he that* BELIEVETH *in me, tho' he were* DEAD *yet shall he* LIVE, does he not intimate that there is a *work* consistent with the degree of *death* of which he speaks? A *believing* out of *death* into *life? A doing the work of God* for life, yea for *eternal life?*

(4.) From these and the like scriptures it is evident that there are different degrees of spiritual death, which you perpetually confound. (1.) Total death, or a full departure of the Holy Spirit. This pass'd upon Adam, and all mankind in him, when he lost God's moral image, fell into selfish nature, and was buried in sin, guilt, shame, and horror. (2.) Death freely visited with a seed of life in our fallen representative, and of course in all his posterity, during the day of their visitation. (3.) Death oppressing this living seed, and *holding*

it

it in unrighteousness, which was the *death* of the Ephesians and Colossians. (4.) Death prevailing again over the living seed, after it had been *powerfully quickened*, and buried in sin and wickedness. This was the death of David during his apostacy, and is still that of all who once believed, but now *live in* Laodicean ease or Sardian *pleasure*. And (5.) the death of confirmed apostates, who, by absolutely *quenching the spirit of life in Christ Jesus* the 2d Adam, are fallen into the miserable state of nature and total helplessness in which the first Adam was, when God preached to him the gospel of his quickening grace. These are said by St. Jude to be *twice dead: dead* by Adam's total apostacy from God, and *dead* by their own personal and final apostacy from the *light of the world*.

II. The foundation of the Crispian *Babel* is literally laid in *confusion*. When you have confounded all the degrees of spiritual death, we may naturally expect to see you confound all the degrees of spiritual life, which our Lord meant when he said, *I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly*. "All that are quickened, do you say, are pardoned and justified." As if a man could not be *quickened* to see his sins and reform, before he is *quickened* so to believe in Christ as to receive the pardon and justification mentioned Col. ii. 13, and Rom. v. 1.

If you read the scriptures without prejudice, you will see that there are several degrees of spiritual life or *quickening* power. (1.) The living *light* which *shines in the darkness* of every man, during the day of his visitation. (2.) The life of the returning sinner, whether he has always lived in open sin as the publican, or once walked in the ways of God as David. (3.) The life of the heathen, who like Cornelius *fears God and works righteousness* according to his light and is accepted in his dispensation. (4.) The life of the pious Jew, who like Samuel *fears God from his youth*. This degree of life is far superior to the preceding, being cherished by the traditions of the patriarchs,

the

the books of the old teſtament, the ſacraments, prieſts, prophets, temple, ſabbaths, ſacrifices, and other means of grace belonging to the Jewiſh œconomy. (5.) The life of the feeble Chriſtian or diſciple of John, who *is baptized with water unto repentance for the remiſſion of ſins*, and believing in *the Lamb of God* immediately pointed out to him enjoys the bleſſings of the primitive Chriſtians before the day of Pentecoſt. And (6.) The ſtill more abundant life, the life of the adult or perfect Chriſtian, imparted to him when the love of God, or power from on high, is plentifully ſhed abroad in his believing ſoul, on the day that Chriſt *baptizes him with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire*, to *ſanctify him wholly* and *ſeal him unto the day of redemption*.

III. When you have overlooked all the degrees of ſpiritual death and life, what wonder is it that you ſhould confound all the degrees of *acceptance* and divine *favour*, with which God bleſſes the children of men. Permit me honoured Sir to bring alſo this article of the Chriſtian faith out of the Calvinian tower of Babel, where it has too long been detained.

(1.) I have already proved, that, in conſequence of the love of benevolence and pity, with which *God loved the world*, and through the *propitiation* which Chriſt *made for the ſins of the whole world*, *the free gift* of an *accepted time* and *a day of ſalvation came upon all men*. In this ſenſe they are all *accepted* and ſent to *work in the vineyard* of their reſpective diſpenſations. This degree of acceptance, with the ſeed of light, life and power that accompanies it, is certainly previous to any work; and in virtue of it infants and compleat idiots go to heaven, *for of ſuch is the kingdom of God*. As they are not capable of burying or improving their talent of inferior acceptance, they are admitted with it to an inferior degree of glory.

(2.) While many abandoned Heathens, and thoſe who follow their abominable ways bury their talent to the laſt, and loſe it together with the degree of acceptance, they once enjoyed *in* or through *the Beloved*:

Beloved; fome, by improving it, are accepted in a higher manner, and like Cornelius receive tokens of increafing favour. The love of pity and benevolence which God bore them, is now mixed with fome love of complacence and delight.

(3.) Faithful Jews, or thofe who are under their difpenfation, improving a fuperior number of talents, are accepted in a fuperior manner, and as a token of it they are made *rulers over five cities*, they partake of greater grace here, and greater glory hereafter.

(4.) John the Baptift and his difciples, I mean, Chriftians who have not yet been baptized with the Holy Ghoft, and with fire, are yet more highly accepted; for John, and the fouls who live up to the height of his difpenfation, are *great in the fight* and favour *of the Lord*. They exceed all thofe who attain only to the perfection of inferior œconomies.

(5.) But thofe Chriftians, who live in the kingdom of God, which was opened to believers on the day of pentecoft, whofe heart burns with his love, and flames with his glory, are accepted in a ftill higher degree; for our Lord informs us, that great as John himfelf was, *the leaft in the kingdom of God is greater than he*, and as a token of fuperior acceptance he fhall be made *ruler over ten cities*: he fhall enter more deeply *into the joy* and glory *of his Lord*.

Altho' concurrence with grace given, is *neceffary* in order to thefe four laft degrees of acceptance, none enjoys them but *in* and thro' *the Beloved*; for as his blood is the meritorious fpring of all our pardons, fo his Spirit is the inexhauftible fountain of all our graces. Nor are we lefs indebted to him for power to be *workers together with God* in the great bufinefs of our falvation, than for all the other wonders of his unmerited goodnefs and redeeming love.

Let no body fay that the doctrine of thefe degrees of acceptance is founded upon metaphyfical diftinctions, and exceeds the capacity of fimple Chriftians;

Chriſtians; for a child ten years old underſtands that he may be accepted to run a race, before he is accepted to receive the prize; and that a man may be accepted as a *day-labourer*, and not as a *ſervant*; be as a *ſteward*, and not as a *child*, as a *friend* and not as a *ſpouſe*. All theſe degrees of *acceptance* are very diſtinct, and the confuſion of them evidently belongs to the Calvinian Babel.

IV. As we have conſidered three of the walls of your tower; it will be not amiſs to caſt a look upon the fourth, which is the utterly confounding of the four degrees that make up a glorified ſaint's *eternal juſtification*. (1.) That which paſſes upon all infants univerſally and is thus deſcribed by St. Paul, *As by the offence of one judgment came upon* ALL *men to condemnation; even ſo by the righteouſneſs of one, the free gift came upon* ALL *men, unto* preſent *juſtification* from original ſin, and future *juſtification of life* upon their repenting, and *believing in the light*, during *the day of their viſitation*. In conſequence of this degree of juſtification we may, without impeaching the veracity of God, ſay *to every creature, God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten ſon*, to *reconcile them unto himſelf, not imputing to them* original ſin unto eternal death, and blotting out their perſonal tranſgreſſions in the moment they *believe with the heart unto righteouſneſs*.

(2.) The juſtification conſequent upon ſuch believing, is thus deſcribed by St. Paul. This bleſſing of *faith imputed for righteouſneſs ſhall be ours, if we believe on him that was raiſed from the dead for our juſtification.—We have believed in Jeſus Chriſt; that we might be* JUSTIFIED *by the faith of Chriſt and not by the works of the law.—Therefore being* JUSTIFIED *by faith we have peace with God thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.

(3.) The Juſtification conſequent upon bringing forth the fruit of a lively faith in the truths that belong to our diſpenſation; this juſtification is thus mentioned by St. James. *Rahab the harlot was juſtified by works.—Abraham our father was juſtified by works.—Ye ſee then how by works a man is juſtified and not by faith only*.

And

And (4.) final Juſtification thus aſſerted by our Lord and St. Paul. *In the day of judgment by thy words ſhalt thou be juſtified*, and *by thy words ſhalt thou be condemned. Circumciſion and uncircumciſion avail nothing*, but *the keeping of the commandments, for the doers of the law ſhall be juſtified.*†

All theſe degrees of juſtification are equally *merited* by Chriſt. We do nothing in order to the firſt, becauſe it finds us in a ſtate of total death. Towards the ſecond *we believe* by the power freely given us in the firſt, and by the additional help of Chriſt's word and the Spirit's agency. *We work by faith* in order to the third. And *we continue believing* in Chriſt and *working together with God*, as we have opportunity, in order to the fourth.

The preaching diſtinctly theſe four degrees of a glorified ſaint's eternal juſtification is attended with peculiar advantages. The firſt juſtification engages the ſinner's attention, encourages his hope, and draws his heart by love.—The ſecond wounds the ſelf-righteous Phariſee, who works without believing, while it binds up the heart of the returning publican, who has no plea but *God be merciful to me a ſinner.*—The third deteſts the hypocriſy and blaſts the vain hopes of all Antinomians, who inſtead of ſhowing their faith by their works, *deny in works the Lord that bought them, and put him to an open ſhame.*—And while the fourth makes even a *Felix tremble*, it cauſes believers to paſs the time

† Theſe four degrees of a glorified ſaint's eternal juſtification are mentioned in the preceding Checks, tho' not ſo diſtinctly as they are here. If treating of our preſent juſtification by faith, and of juſtification by works in the day of judgment, I have called them our "firſt and ſecond juſtification," it was not to exclude the other two, but to attack gradually reigning prejudice, and accommodate myſelf to the language of my honoured opponent, who called *juſtification in the day of judgment a ſecond juſtification.* I ſhould have been more exact at firſt: but I was ſo intent in demonſtrating the *thing*, that I did not think *then* of contending for the moſt proper *name*. Nor did I ſee then of what importance it is, to drag the monſter *error* out of the den of *confuſion* in which he hides himſelf.

time of their ſojourning here in humble and chearful watchfulneſs.

Tho' all theſe degrees of juſtification meet in glorified ſaints, we offer violence to ſcripture if we think with Dr. Criſp that they are inſeparable. For all the wicked who *quench the* convincing *Spirit*, and are finally *given up to a reprobate mind*, fall from the firſt, as well as Pharaoh. All who *receive the ſeed among thorns*, all who do not forgive their fellow ſervants, all who *begin in the ſpirit* and *end in the fleſh*, and all who *draw back* and become *ſons* or daughters *of perdition*, by falling from the third, loſe the ſecond, as Hymeneus, Philetus, and Demas. And none partake of the fourth but thoſe who bear fruit unto perfection according to one or another of the divine diſpenſations; ſome producing *thirty-fold* like Heathens, *ſome ſixty-fold* like Jews, and *ſome an hundred fold* like Chriſtians.

From the whole it appears that altho' we can abſolutely do nothing towards our firſt juſtification, yet to ſay that neither faith nor works are required in order to the other three, is one of the boldeſt, moſt unſcriptural, and moſt dangerous aſſertions in the world; which ſets aſide the beſt half of the ſcriptures, and lets groſs Antinomianiſm come in full tide upon the church.

Having thus taken a view of the confuſion in which Calvin and Criſp have laid the foundation of their ſchemes, I return to the arguments by which you ſupport their miſtakes.

I. "If you ſuppoſe, do you ſay, that there are any conditional works before juſtification, theſe works muſt either be the works of one who is in a ſtate of nature, or in a ſtate of grace, either condemned by the law or abſolved by the goſpel."

A new ſophiſm this! No works are previous to juſtification from original ſin, and to the quickning *light which enlightens every man that comes into the world*. And the works that a penitent does in order to the ſubſequent juſtifications, ſuch as ceaſing to do evil, learning to do well, repenting, believing, and perſevering in obedient faith, are

all done in a ſtate of initial, progreſſive, or perfected grace; not under the Adamic law which did not admit of repentance, but under the goſpel of Chriſt which ſays, *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord who will abundantly pardon* his ſins, *cleanſe him from all unrighteouſneſs*, and even *fill* him *with the fulneſs of God.*

II. You proceed: if a man in a ſtate of nature does works in order to juſtification, they "cannot pleaſe God, becauſe he is in a ſtate of utter enmity againſt him." What Sir, do you think, that a man "in a ſtate of *utter* enmity againſt God" will do any thing in order to recover his favour? When Adam was in that ſtate, did he ſo much as once aſk pardon? If he had, would he not have evidenced a deſire of reconciliation, and conſequently a degree of apoſtacy ſhort of what you call *utter enmity?*

III. You quote ſcripture: "He that does ſomething in order to juſtification cannot pleaſe God, *becauſe he is alienated from the life of God, thro' the ignorance that is in him, becauſe of the blindneſs of his heart.*" An unhappy quotation this: for the apoſtle did not ſpeak thoſe words of thoſe honeſt Heathens, who, in obedience to *the light of the world*, did ſomething in order to juſtification: but of thoſe abandoned Pagans, who, as he obſerves in the next verſe, *being paſt feeling, had given themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs.* Thus to prove that men have not a talent of power to *work the works of God*, you produce men who have buried it, that they might *work all uncleanneſs* without control, yea, *with greedineſs.*

You would have avoided this miſtake, if you had conſidered that the Heathens mentioned there by St. Paul, were of the ſtamp of thoſe whom he deſcribes, Rom. 1. and whom he repreſents as *given up* by God *to a reprobate mind*, BECAUSE *when they knew God, they glorified him not as God*, and *did not like to retain him in their knowledge.* Here we may

may obſerve (1.) that thoſe reprobate Heathens had once ſome *knowledge* of God, and of courſe ſome *life*; for *this is eternal* LIFE *to* KNOW God. (2.) That if they were given up, BECAUSE they did not uſe that talent of *divine knowledge*, it was not *becauſe* they were eternally and unconditionally reprobated; whence I beg leave to conclude, that if eternal unconditional reprobation is a mere chimera, ſo is likewiſe eternal unconditional election.

You might have objected with much more plauſibility, that *when the Epheſians were in the fleſh they were without hope, without Chriſt, and without God in the world*: And if you had, I would have replied that theſe words cannot be taken in their full latitude, for the following reaſons, which appear to me unanſwerable. (1.) The Epheſians before their converſion were not totally *without hope*, but *without a* GOOD *hope*. They probably had as preſumptuous a hope as David in Uriah's bed, or Agag when he thought the bitterneſs of death was paſt. (2.) They *were without Chriſt*, juſt as a man who has buried his talent is without it. But as he may dig it up, and uſe it, if he ſees his folly in time; ſo could, and ſo did the Epheſians. (3.) If they were in every ſenſe *without Chriſt*, what becomes of the doctrine maintained in your fourth letter, that they "were for ever and for ever compleat *in Chriſt?*" (4.) They were not entirely *without God; for in him they lived, moved, and had their being*; nor were they without him as abſolute reprobates, for they *knew the day of their viſitation* before it was over. It remains then that they were *without God*, as the prodigal ſon was without his father, when he *fed ſwine in the far country*; and that they could and did return to their heavenly Father as well as he.

IV. You go on: "He who does ſomething in order to juſtification, not being grafted in Chriſt the true vine, cannot bring forth any good fruit; he can do nothing at all." I beg, Sir, you would produce one man, who has not *ſinned the ſin unto death*, that can abſolutely do nothing, that cannot

ceafe from one fin, and take up the practice of one duty. You will as foon find a faint in hell as fuch a man upon earth. Even thofe who in their *voluntary humility* fay perpetually, that "they can do nothing," refute their own doctrine by their very confeffions; for he who confeffes his helplefnefs, undoubtedly does fomething, unlefs by fome new rule in logic it can be demonftrated, that confeffing our impotence, and complaining of our mifery, is "doing nothing."

When our Lord fays, *Without me ye can do nothing*, does he fay that we are totally without him? When he declares that *no man cometh unto him unlefs the Father draw him*, does he infinuate that the Father does *not draw all?* or that he draws all *irrefiftibly?* or that thofe who are drawn at one time may not *draw back* at any other? Is it right to prefs fcripture into the fervice of a fyftem, by ftraining its meaning fo far beyond the import of the words?

Again, though a man may not be "grafted in Chrift" according to the Jewifh or Chriftian difpenfation; may he not partake of his quickening fap, according to the more general difpenfation of that *faving grace*, which *has appeared to all men*? May not the branches in which that *faving grace appears*, have fome connexion with Chrift the heavenly vine, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, as well as Job and his friends, Melchifedec, Plato, the wife men, Cornelius, fome of his Soldiers, and many more who brought forth fruits according to their difpenfation? Does not the firft general juftification fo graft all men in him, that if they *bear not fruit* during their *accepted time*, they are juftly *taken away, caft forth, and burned as* barren *branches?*

V. Your knowledge of the fcripture made you foreſee this anſwer, and to obviate it you fay: "if you tell me that I miſtake, that although we muſt ceaſe from evil, repent, &c. yet you are far from ſuppoſing we can perform theſe things in our own natural ſtrength. I aſk then, in whoſe ſtrength are they performed? You ſay, in the ſtrength of Chriſt,

Chriſt, and by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, according to theſe ſcriptures, *I can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening me, being ſtrengthened with might in the inner man.*"

Permit me to tell you, honoured Sir, that I do not admire your quoting ſcripture for me. You take care to keep out of ſight the paſſages I have quoted, and to produce thoſe which are foreign to the queſtion. To ſhew that even a ſinful Heathen may work for, as well as from life, I could never be ſo deſtitute of common ſenſe as to urge the experience of St. Paul, *a father in Chriſt:* and that of the Epheſians, who were Chriſtians *ſealed unto the day of redemption.*

To do juſtice to free grace, inſtead of the abovementioned improper ſcriptures, you ſhould have produced thoſe which I have quoted in the vindication—Chriſt is *the light of the world, which enlightens every man that cometh into the world—I am come that they might have life—Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life. The grace of God which bringeth ſalvation hath appeared unto all men.* God's *ſpirit ſtrives with man*, even with thoſe who periſh. *He commands all men every where to repent*; nor does he deſire to *reap where he has not ſown.*

VI. Such ſcripture as theſe would have been to the purpoſe; but I excuſe your producing others; for if theſe had appeared, you would have raiſed more duſt in ſix lines, than you could have laid in ſixty pages; and every attentive reader would have detected the fallacy of your grand argument: "as ſoon may we *expect* living actions from a dead corpſe; light out of darkneſs; light out of blindneſs; love out of enmity; wiſdom out of ignorance; fruit out of barrenneſs, &c. &c. &c. as look for any one good work or thought from a ſoul who is not" (in ſome degree) "quickened by the Holy Ghoſt, and who has not yet found favour with God:" ſo far at leaſt as to be bleſſed with a *day of ſalvation*, and to be a partaker of *the free gift* which *is come upon all men.*

But, I pray, who is guilty of theſe abſurdities?

Who expects living actions from a dead corpse, &c. &c. ? You or we ? You who believe that the greatest part of mankind are left as graceless as devils, as helpless as corpses ; and yet gravely go and preach to them repentance and faith, threatening them with an aggravated damnation if they do not turn ? Or we who believe that *Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man ;* and that his saving, quickening grace *hath appeared unto all men ?* Who puts foolish speeches in the mouth of the only wise God ? You, who make him expostulate with souls as dead as corpses, and say *ye will not come unto me that ye might have life ?* Or we, who assert upon the testimony of the Holy Ghost, that God, by *working in us both to will and to do*, puts us again in a capacity of *working out our salvation with fear and trembling ?* Will not our impartial readers see that the absurdity which you try to fix upon us, falls at your own door ; and, if your doctrine is true, at the door of the sanctuary itself ?

VII. You pursue : " it is most clear that every soul who works in the strength of Christ, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, is already a pardoned and justified soul ; he already has everlasting life." Here is some truth and some error ; let us endeavour to separate them. Every soul who works in the strength of Christ's preventing grace, and by his *Spirit convincing the world of sin*, is undoubtedly interested in the first degree of justification : he is justified from the guilt of original sin, and when he believes, from the guilt of his own actual sins ; but it is absurd to suppose he is justified in the day of judgment, when that day is not yet come. He hath a seed of life, or else he could not work ; but it is a doubt if this seed will take root ; and in case it does, the heavenly plant of righteousness may be *choaked* by *the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, or the desire of other things*, and by that means *become unfruitful.*

As many barbarous mothers destroy the fruit of their womb, either before or after it comes to the birth ; so many obstinate sinners obstruct the growth

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of the spiritual *seed* that *bruises the serpent's head*; and many flagrant apostates, in *whose heart Christ* was once *formed*, *crucify him afresh*, and *quench the spirit* of his grace. Hence the many miscarriages and apostacies, for which Elisha Coles is obliged to account thus. There are "monsters in spirituals, in whom there is something begotten in their wills, by the common strivings and enlightenings of the Spirit, which attains to a kind of *formality*, but proves in the end a lump of *dead flesh*." Surely that great Calvinian divine was brought to a strait when he thus fathered *formality* and *dead flesh* upon the Holy Ghost.

VIII. I follow you: "therefore all talk of working for life, and in order to find favour with God, is not less absurd, than if you were to suppose, that a man could at the same moment be both condemned and absolved." What, Sir! may not a man be justly condemned, and yet graciously reprieved? Nay, may not the judge give him an opportunity to make the best of his reprieve, in order to get a full pardon and a place at court? At Geneva we think that the absurdity does not consist in asserting, but in denying it.—"Awake and asleep." What, Sir, is it an absurdity to think that a man may be in the same moment *awake* in one respect, and *asleep* in another? Does not St. Paul say, *let us awake out of sleep*? But this is not all, even in Geneva people can be *drowsy*; that is, half awake and half asleep.—Dead and alive." I hope you will not fix the charge of absurdity upon Christ, for saying that *a certain man was left* HALF DEAD, and of course *half alive*; and for exhorting the people of Sardis who were *dead*, to *strengthen the things that remained and were ready to die*: nor yet upon St. Paul, for saying that the *dead body* of Abraham begat Isaac, and for speaking of a woman who *was dead while she lived*.

IX. You go on and say, that "it is as absurd to talk of working for life, as to assert that we can be at the same time loved and hated of God." But you forget, Sir, that there are a thousand degrees

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of love and hatred; and that, in the scripture language, *loving less* is called *hating: Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated. Except a man hate his father, &c. he cannot be my disciple.* Yea, and we can without absurdity say, that we love the same person in one respect, and hate her in another. I may love a woman as a neighbour, and yet loath her if I consider her in the capacity of a wife. And what absurdity is there in asserting, that while the day of grace lasts, God loves, and yet hates an impenitent sinner? He loves him as his redeemed creature, yet hates him as his rebellious creature: or, in other terms, he loves him with a love of benevolence; but has no more love of complacence for him, than for the devil himself.

X. You proceed: "to talk of working for life is not less absurd, than if you were to suppose, that a man can be at the same moment one with Christ by his Spirit dwelling in the heart, and yet not have redemption, peace, and reconciliation by the blood of his cross." Here is, if I mistake not, the language of Babel.

1. You confound the various degrees of *redemption*. Are not thousands of souls redeemed by the *blood* of Christ's cross, who are not yet redeemed by the *power* of his Spirit? May not every rebellious sinner out of hell say, God REDEEMETH *my life from destruction?* Is it not a degree of redemption to be kept out of hell, enjoying the good thing of this life, and called to secure the blessings of the next? Did not Cain, Esau, Pharaoh, Saul, and Judas, the five great reprobates, as some account them, enjoy this degree of redemption for many years? Have not believers a higher degree of REDEMPTION, *even the forgiveness of their sins?* And do not they wait for the highest degree of it, even *the* REDEMPTION *of their body*, when the trump of God will sound, and wake the dead? Rom. viii. 23.

2. As you confound all the degrees of *redemption*, so you do all the degrees of *the manifestation of the Spirit*. He visits all, so as to *strive with* and *reprove* them

them as he did mankind in the days of Noah: but this is no mark that their *peace* is made, and a firm reconciliation brought about; witneſs the deluge, which God ſent upon thoſe with whom his Spirit had particularly ſtriven 120 years in the days of Noah.—Again ſome have *the ſpirit of bondage unto fear;* but this, far from being a ſign that they have full reconciliation, is a divine conſciouſneſs that they have it not. And others have had the ſpirit of adoption, and after having begun in him ſo grieve or quench him as to end in the fleſh. But in the Calvinian Babel theſe ſcriptural, experimental diſtinctions are exploded as metaphyſical, if not dreadfully heretical.

XI. You proceed: "you will not aſſert that a ſoul who is quickened together with Chriſt, and in whom the ſpirit of Jeſus dwells by his gracious influences can be in a ſtate of enmity with God." Still the ſame confounding of things which ſhould be carefully diſtinguiſhed! May not a ſinner "be quickened" by the ſeed of life, and yet *hold* it *in unrighteouſneſs?* May not a backſlider *crucify Chriſt afreſh* in "the gracious influences of his ſpirit?" And are not ſuch perſons "in a ſtate of enmity with God?" But if by a ſoul quickened together "with Chriſt and in whom the ſpirit of Jeſus dwells," you mean a believer compleatly *baptized with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire*, in whom he that once viſited as a monitor now fully reſides as a comforter; you are right, the enmity ceaſes, the carnal mind and body of ſin are deſtroyed, and *God is all in all* to that *juſt man made perfect in love.*

XII. You add: "If a man is not in a ſtate of enmity, then he muſt be in a ſtate of pardon and reconciliation." What, Sir! Is there no medium between theſe extremes? There is, as ſurely as the morning dawn intervenes between midnight and noon day. If the king ſays to ſome rebels, "Lay down your arms, ſurrender, kiſs my ſon, and you ſhall be pardoned;" the reconciliation on the king's part is undoubtedly begun. So far *was God in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf.* But

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can it be said that the reconciliation is begun on the part of the rebels, who have not yet laid down any of their arms? Does not the reconciliation gradually take place as they gradually comply with the king's terms? If they are long in coming to kiss the king's son, is not their full reconciliation suspended till they have fulfilled that last of the king's terms? And tho' the king made the overtures of the reconciliation, is there the least absurdity in saying that they surrender, and kiss the son, in order to find reconciliation? Nay is it either sense or truth to assert, that they are absolutely to do nothing towards it?

XIII. What you say about the 13th article of our church is answered beforehand, Vind. page 58.—But what follows deserves some notice. "Whenever God puts forth his quickning power upon a soul, it is in consequence, of his having already taken that soul in covenant with himself, and having washed it white in the blood of the Lamb slain." This is very true, if you speak of the *covenant* of grace, which God made with our first parent and representative after the fall; and of the *washing* of all mankind *white* in the blood of the Lamb from the guilt of original sin, so far as to remit the eternal punishment of it. But you are dreadfully mistaken, if you understand it of the three subsequent degrees of justification and salvation which do not take place but as we *work* them *out with fear and trembling*, as *God works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

XIV. In the next page you ask some scriptural questions, which I shall scripturally answer. "What did the expiring thief do?" Some hours before he died he obeyed this precept, *To day if you will hear his voice harden not your heart*; he confessed his sin, and believed in Jesus.——"What did Mary Magdalen do?" She forsook her lovers and followed Jesus into Simon's house. "What Lydia?" She WORSHIPPED God, and *resorted where prayer was wont to be made.*—"What the Philippian jailor?" He ceased from attempting self-murder, and

and *falling at the apoſtles feet*, enquired *what he muſt do to be ſaved.*—" What the ſerpent-bitten Iſraelites?" They *looked at the brazen ſerpent.*—" What Paul himſelf?" *For this cauſe I obtained mercy*, ſays he, *becauſe I did it ignorantly in unbelief*, 1. Tim. i. 13. But this was not all, for, he *continued praying three-days and three nights;* and when Ananias came to him, he *tarried* no longer, but *aroſe and waſhed his ſins, calling on the name of the Lord.*—" What did the Corinthians do?" They *heard and believed*, Acts viii. 8.—" And what the Epheſians?" They *truſted in Chriſt after that they heard the word of truth*, Eph. i. 13.

XV. In the next paragraph (page 6, line 28.) you gravely propoſe the very objection which I have anſwered, Vind. page 58, without taking the leaſt notice of my anſwer. And in the next page you advance one of Dr. Criſp's paradoxes. "*Wherever God puts forth his power upon a ſoul* (and he does ſo whenever he viſits it with even a touch of preventing grace) *pardon and reconciliation are already obtained by ſuch a one. He ſhall never come into condemnation.*

Young penitents, beware! If you admit this tenet, you will probably ſtay in the *far country*, vainly fancying you are in your *Father's houſe*, becauſe you have felt a deſire to be there. Upon this ſcheme of doctrine, Lot's wife might have ſet down at the gate of Sodom, concluding that becauſe the angels had taken her by the hand, ſhe was already in Zoar. A dangerous deluſion this, againſt which our Lord himſelf cautions us by crying aloud, REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE.

I would take the liberty to expoſtulate with you, honoured Sir, about this paradox, if I had not ſome hope, that it is rather owing to the printer's miſtake than your own. If you wrote in your manuſcript, *pardon is already obtained* FOR, not BY, *ſuch a one*, we are agreed; for "Chriſt made upon the croſs a ſufficient ſacrifice and ſatisfaction *for* the ſins of the whole world." But what he *procured* FOR *us* is not *obtained* BY *us*, till the Holy

Ghoſt

Ghoſt makes the application by faith. "If I had a mind, ſaid the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, to hinder the progreſs of the goſpel, and to eſtabliſh the kingdom of darkneſs, I would go about telling people, they might have the Spirit of God and yet not feel it;" or, which is much the ſame, that the pardon which Chriſt procured *for* them, is already obtained *by* them, whether they enjoy a ſenſe of it or not.

XVI. In the next paragraph, page 7, (who could believe it!) you come fully into Mr. W.'s doctrine of "doing ſomething, in order to obtain juſtification." You was reminded (Vind. page 48. that "St. Paul and Mr. W. generally mean by juſtification, that wonderful tranſaction of the Spirit of God in a returning prodigal's conſcience by which the forgiveneſs of his ſins is proclaimed to him thro' the blood of ſprinkling." Nevertheleſs, ſpeaking of the *ſenſe of pardon*, and *the teſtifying of* it *to a ſeeker's conſcience*, you grant that *this knowledge of our intereſt in Chriſt*, (this experienced juſtification) *is certainly to be ſought in the uſe of all appointed means; we are to ſeek that we may find, to aſk that we may have, to knock that it might be opened unto us. In this ſenſe*, (the very ſenſe we generally fix to the word juſtification) *all the texts you have brought to prove that man is to do ſomething in order to obtain juſtification and to find favour with God, admit of an* EASY SOLUTION." That is in plain Engliſh, eaſily demonſtrate the truth of Mr. W's propoſition, which has been ſo loudly exclaimed againſt as *dreadfully heretical*.

O prejudice, thou miſchievous brother of diſcord, why didſt thou caſt thy black vail in June, and the following months, over the EASY SOLUTION which has been found out in December? And what a pity is it, dear Sir, you did not ſee this *ſolution* before you had attempted to expoſe our grey-headed Eliſha, by the publication of that weak and trifling dialogue with the popiſh friar at Paris!

XVII. The next page, the 8th, is already anſwered, Vind. page 59, &c. and the 9th page is

anſwered

anſwered in the ſecond check, page 22, in the note upon the Verſifier's performance.

Page 10. After ſhewing that you confound the atonement with the application of it, the work of Chriſt with that of the Holy Ghoſt, you produce one of my arguments, (the firſt you have attempted to refute,) to prove that we muſt do ſomething in order to juſtification; I had aſſerted that we muſt believe, faith being previous to juſtification. You ſay, *I deny the aſſertion.* Do you indeed, honoured Sir! Upon what ground? "The Holy Ghoſt teaches, ſay you, that *all who* ARE *juſtified.*" And does this prove the point? The king ſays to a deſerter, Bow to my Son, and thou ſhalt not be ſhot, Bow to the Prince, adds an officer: all who bow to him ARE *pardoned.* Muſt the ſoldier conclude from the words ARE *pardoned,* that the pardon is previous to the bow? Again, You are ſick, and your phyſician ſays, Take this medicine; all who take it ARE *cured.* Very well, anſwers your nurſe, you need not then *diſtreſs and perplex* my Maſter, by making him take your remedy. The taking of it cannot poſſibly be previous to his recovery, for you ſay, all who take it ARE *cured.* This is juſt ſuch another argument as that of my honoured friend. O Sir, how tottering is that ſyſtem, which even ſuch a writer as yourſelf cannot prop up, without putting ſo forced a conſtruction upon the apoſtle's words, *All that believe* ARE *juſtified.*

Now we have ſeen upon what ſcriptural ground you maintain, that believing cannot be previous to juſtification, permit me, honoured Sir, to quote ſome of the many ſcriptures which induce us to believe juſt the reverſe. BELIEVE *in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt and thou ſhalt be ſaved*—that is, in the loweſt ſenſe of the word, *thou ſhalt be* juſtified; for *God juſtifies the ungodly that* BELIEVE *in Jeſus.*—*We have* BELIEVED *in Jeſus Chriſt, that we might be juſtify'd by the* FAITH *of Chriſt*—*Whom he hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, thro'* FAITH *in his blood, for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt.*——*As Moſes lifted up the ſerpent, even ſo muſt the Son of man be lifted up, that*

 whoſoever

whoſoever BELIEVETH *in him ſhould not periſh, ſhould* be pardoned, &c.——*Faith ſhall be imputed to us for righteouſneſs, if we* BELIEVE *on him who raiſed up Jeſus.—Being therefore juſtified by* FAITH *we have peace with God*——*Without* FAITH *it is impoſſible to pleaſe God. He that* BELIEVETH NOT far from being juſtified, as is inſinuated, *ſhall be damned, the wrath of God abideth on him, he is* CONDEMNED ALREADY, John iii. 18. Light cannot be more oppoſite to darkneſs, than this doctrine of Chriſt to that which my honoured friend thinks it his duty to patronize.

XVIII. When you have endeavoured to defend your ſentiment from ſcripture, you attempt to do it from reaſon. *Faith*, ſay you, *can no more ſubſiſt without its object, than there can be a marriage without a huſband.* This is as proper an argument as you could advance, had you intended to diſprove the doctrine you ſeem ſtudious to defend, for it is evident that a woman muſt be married, before ſhe can have a huſband. So ſure then as marriage is previous to having an huſband, faith is previous to receiving Chriſt: for we receive him by faith. John i. 12.

However, from this extraordinary argument, you *conclude that the doctrine of believing before juſtification is not leſs contrary to reaſon than it is to ſcripture*; but I flatter myſelf that my judicious readers will draw a concluſion diametrically oppoſite.

XIX. A quotation from St. Auguſtin appears next, and ſecures the ruin of your ſcheme. For if faith is compared to *a lantern*, and Chriſt to the *light in the lantern*, common ſenſe tells us, we muſt have the lantern *before* we can receive the candle which is to give us light. Or, in other words, we muſt have faith *before* we can receive Chriſt: for you very juſtly obſerve, that *faith receiveth Chriſt who is the true light.*

XX. St. Auguſtin's lantern makes way for the witticiſm with which you conclude your ſecond epiſtle. "No letters ſays my honoured friend, were ſent thro' the various provinces againſt old Mordecai for ſuppoſing that the woman, Luke

Luke 15, lights a candle, &c. in order to find her loſt piece; but becauſe he inſiſts upon it, that the piece lights the candle, ſweeps the houſe, and ſearches diligently in order to find the woman." Permit me to aſk dear Sir, whether your wit here has not for a moment got the ſtart of your judgment? I introduced the *woman ſeeking the piece ſhe had loſt*, merely to ſhew that it is neither an hereſy, nor an abſurdity to "ſeek ſomething in order to find it;" and that inſtance proved my point full as well, as if I had fixed upon *Saul ſeeking his father's aſſes*, or *Jacob ſeeking his brethren in Dothan.*

If it is as great an *abſurdity* to ſay, that ſinners are to *ſeek the Lord*, as it is to ſay that a piece ſeeks the woman that has loſt it; let me tell you, dear Sir, that Mr. W. has the good fortune to be countenanced in his folly, firſt by yourſelf, who tell us, page 7, that the knowledge of Chriſt and our intereſt in him *is certainly to be found in the uſe of all the appointed means:* and ſecondly by Iſaiah, who ſays *ſeek ye the Lord while he may be found:* by St. Paul, who tells the Athenians that *all nations of men* are *to ſeek the Lord:* and by Chriſt himſelf who ſays, *they that ſeek me early ſhall find me—ſeek that you may find, &c.*

I leave you to judge, honoured Sir, whether it was worth your while to impeach Mr. W's *good ſenſe* not only by reflecting upon *your own*, but by inevitably involving Iſaiah, St. Paul, and our Lord himſelf in the ridicule caſt upon my vindicated friend! For the ſame ſinner, who is repreſented by the *loſt piece*, is a few verſes before repreſented by the *loſt ſon:* and you know Jeſus Chriſt tells us that he came from far to ſeek his father's pardon and aſſiſtance. You begin your

THIRD LETTER

By ſaying, "how God may deal with the Heathen world, is not for us to pry into." But we may believe what God has revealed. If the Holy Ghoſt declares, that *in every nation he that feareth*

God, and worketh righteousness is accepted of him, we may credit what he says, without "being wise above what is written."

If you cannot set aside that apostolic part of the minutes, you try however to press it into the service of your doctrine. "There is, say you, a material difference between saying *He that feareth God and worketh righteousness* is *accepted*, and SHALL BE accepted," and because "the verb is in the present tense" you conclude, there is no need of fearing God or working righteousness, in order to find acceptance. This is exactly such another argument as that which I just now refuted. "we need not believe in order to be justified, because it is said, *all that believe* ARE *justified*, and not SHALL BE *justified*." You can no more prove by the one, that Cornelius provoking God and working unrighteousness, was accepted of him; than by the other that unbelievers ARE *justified*, because it is said that *believers* are so.

A similar instance may convince you of it. *All run*, says St. Paul, *but one receiveth the prize.* I who am a stranger to refinements, immediately conclude from those words, that running is *previous* to the receiving of the prize, and *in order* to it. No says a friend, "*there is a material difference between saying, one* RECEIVETH *the prize, and one* SHALL RECEIVE *the prize. The verb is in the present tense, and therefore the plain sense of the passage is (not by running he does any thing to receive the prize, but) that he who runs* IS *possessed of the prize, and proves himself to be so.* Candid reader, if such an argument proselytes thee to Dr. Crisp's doctrine, I shall suspect there is no small difference between English and Suisse reason.

However to make up the weight of your argument you add, "Cornelius was a chosen vessel." True, for *God hath chosen to himself the man that is* GODLY; and such was Cornelius; *a devout man*, says St. Luke, *and one that feareth God with all his house.* But if my honoured opponent speaks of an *election*, which drags after it the horrors of *absolute* reprobation,

bation, and hangs the mill-ſtone of *unavoidable* damnation about the neck of millions of our fellow-creatures, I muſt call for *proof*.

Till it comes, I follow you in your obſervations upon the merit or rewardableneſs of good works. Moſt of them are anſwered Vind. page 74, &c. and 2d check page 43. The reſt I anſwer thus.

(1.) If you do not believe Mr. Henry when he aſſures us David ſpeaks OF HIMSELF, *the Lord rewarded me according to my righteouſneſs, &c.* Pſ. 18. believe at leaſt the ſacred hiſtorian, who confirms my aſſertion, 2 Sam. 22. and conſider the very title of the Pſalm, *David ſpoke unto the Lord the words of this ſong, in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.*

(2.) But "when David ſpeaks in his own perſon, his language is very different." *Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant*, ſays he, *for in thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified.* The pſalmiſt does not here contradict what he ſays of the rewardableneſs of good works, Pſ. 18. He only appeals from the *law of innocence* to the *law of grace*, and only diſclaims all merit in point of juſtification and ſalvation, a thing which Mr. W. takes care to do when he ſays, even in the minutes, "not by the merit of works," but by "believing in Chriſt."

(3.) My honoured correſpondent aſks next, "where is the man who has the witneſs of having done what God commanded? I anſwer, every one has who *walks in the light as God is in the light*, and can ſay with St. John, *beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God; and whatſoever we aſk we receive of him*, BECAUSE *we keep his commandments, and do thoſe things which are pleaſing in his ſight.*

(4.) But Biſhop Beveridge ſpoke juſt the reverſe; for he ſaid in his Private Thoughts "I ſin in my beſt duties, &c." That may be; for he was but a young convert when he wrote his Private Thoughts. I hope, before he died he enjoyed more goſpel liberty. But whether he did or not, we appeal from HIS *private thoughts* to the above-

mentioned *public declaration* and *evangelical experience* of St. JOHN.

(5.) If many Roman Catholics do not aſcribe merit to "mere external performances," I have "done them great injuſtice;" and to repair that wrong, I declare my full approbation of the excellent paſſage upon *merit* which you quote in French from the works of the biſhop of Meaux. I ſay *in French*, becauſe your Engliſh tranſlation repreſents him as looking on *all* opinion of merit as *preſumptuous*, whereas he blames only l' opinion d' un merite preſomptueux, the doctrine of a preſumpteous merit—of a merit which is not all derived from Chriſt, and does not terminate in the glory of his grace.

The dying challenge of Alex. Seton is anſwered in the 2d Check, 1ſt Letter. As to your quotation from biſhop Cooper, it does as little credit to his *learning*, as to his *charity*; for St. Auguſtin, who had no more "the ſpirit of Antichriſt" than the biſhop himſelf, uſes perpetually the word *merit*, in ſpeaking of man and his works.

Let us now ſee how you "ſplit the hair," that is, fix the difference there is, between being rewarded *according to our works*, † BECAUSE *of our works*, and *ſecundum merita operum*, according to the *merit* or *rewardableneſs* which Chriſt gives to our works. "The difference, ſay you, by no means depends upon the ſplitting of an hair; thoſe expreſſions are as wide as eaſt from weſt." Are they indeed! Then it muſt be the *eaſt* and the *weſt* of the map of the world, which meet in one common line upon the globe. This will appear if we conſider the manner in which you untie the Gordian knot.

"Good works, ſay you, are rewarded becauſe God of his own meer favour, rich grace, and undeſerved bounty, has promiſed that he will freely give ſuch rewards to thoſe whom he has choſen in his

† See 1 John iii. 22, and Vind. page 70. You have no right to throw out this middle term till you have proved that my quotations are falſe.

his dear Son." Now, Sir, simplify this sentence, and you tell us just that "good works are rewarded because God *freely promised* to reward them."

And is this the *east* of my honoured opponent's orthodoxy! Surprizing! It just meets the west of popish heterodoxy. You know Sir, that Thomas Aquinas and Scotus are as great divines among the Romanists, as Calvin and Luther among the Protestants: and in flying from Mr. Wesley you are just gone over to Scotus and Baxter; for Scotus and Clara his disciple maintain, that if God gives rewards to the godly, *non oritur obligato ex natura actus, sed ex suppositione decreti & promissi, the obligation does not arise from the nature of the action rewarded, but from the decree and* free *promise of the rewarder. Though so much be given in scripture to good works*, says the council of Trent, *yet far be it from a christian to glory in himself, and not in the Lord, whose goodness is so great to all men, that he wills those things to be* THEIR MERITS, *which are* HIS GIFTS. Can. 16. de Justif.

Most Protestants, says Baxter, *will take merit to signify something which profiteth God, and which is our own, and not his* GIFT *and* GRACE, *but they are mistaken.*

Some however are more candid; Bucer says *if by* MERITING *the holy fathers and others mean nothing but to do in faith, by the grace of God, good works which the Lord has* PROMISED *to reward, in this sense* (which is that which Scotus, Baxter, and Mr. W. fix to *merit*) *we shall in no wise condemn that word.*

Hence it is, that whole congregations of real protestants have not scrupled at times to use the word WE MERIT in their humblest addresses to the throne of grace. "Congregations of real Protestants! says my honoured friend, *Popery is about midway between Protestantism and* such worshippers. Who are they?" I answer they are the orthodox opposers of the minutes, the truly honourable the Countess of Huntingdon, the Rev. Mr. Shirley, the Rev. Mr. Madan, and all the congregations that use their hymns; for they all agree to sing,

"Thou

"Thou haſt the righteouſneſs ſupply'd
By which we MERIT heaven."

See Lady Huntingdon's Hymns, Briſtol edition, page 339; and the Rev. Mr. Madan's collection which you frequently uſe, hymn 25. page 2-, laſt ſtanza. Come then, dear Sir, while Mr. M. ſhakes hands with his venerable father Mr. W. permit the vindicator of the minutes to do the ſame with the author of Pietas Oxonienſis, and let us lovingly follow Scotus and Baxter ſinging, *Chriſt hath the righteouſneſs ſupply'd by which* WE MERIT *heaven.*

If you ſay, True, but it is of *God's own meer favour, rich grace,* and *undeſerved bounty in his dear Son;* I anſwer, We are agreed, and before-hand I ſubſcribe an hundred ſuch clauſes, being fully perſuaded of the truth of Mr. W's propoſition when explained according to the analogy of faith, "*There is no* original *merit but in the blood* and obedience *of Chriſt*; and no derived *merit*, or (if you diſlike that word out of the Lock-chapel) no derived *rewardableneſs*, but that which we are ſupplied with thro' the Spirit of Chriſt and the blood of his croſs:" If Mr. W. meant any more by the ſaying you have quoted, he will permit me to uſe his own words, and ſay that he "leaned too much toward Calviniſm."

I cannot better cloſe the ſubject of *merit*, and requite your quotation from Dr. Willet, than by tranſcribing a third paſſage from the pious and judicious Mr. Baxter.

"We are agreed on the negative: (1.) That no man or angel can merit of God in proper commutative juſtice, giving him ſomewhat for his benefits that ſhall profit him, or to which he had no abſolute right. (2.) No man can merit any thing of God upon the terms of the law of innocency, (but puniſhment) (3.) Nor can he merit any thing of God by the law of grace, unleſs it be ſuppoſed firſt to be a *free gift* and merited by Chriſt."

"And affirmatively we are, I think, agreed (1.) That God governs us by a *law of Grace* which hath a *promiſe*, and gives by way of *reward*. (2.) That God

God calls it *his justice* to reward men according to his law of grace, Heb. xi. 6. 2 Tim. iv. 8. (3.) That this supposes, that such works as God rewards have a *moral aptitude* for that reward, which chiefly consists in these things, that they spring from the Spirit of God, that their faultiness is pardoned thro' the blood and merits of Christ, that they are done in the love and to the glory of God, and that they are presented to God by Jesus Christ. (4.) That this *moral aptitude*, is called in scripture ἀξία, that is *worthiness* or *merit*; so that thus far *worthiness* or *merit* is a scripture phrase. And (5.) that this *worthiness* or *merit* is only in point of *paternal, governing justice*, according to the *law of grace*, ordering that which in itself is a *free gift merited by Christ.*"

"All orthodox Christians hold the fore-described doctrine of merit in *sense*, tho' not in *words*: for they that deny *merit*, confess the *rewardableness* of our obedience, and acknowledge that the scripture useth the term *worthy*, and that ἄξιος and ἀξία may be translated *meriting* and *merit*, as well as *worthy* and *worthiness*. This is the same thing in other words, which the antient Christians meant by *merit*. When godly persons earnestly extol holiness, saying that *the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour*, and yet deny all *merit*, reviling all that assert it, they do but shew that they understand not the word, and think others also misunderstand it: and so we are reproaching one another, where we are agreed and know it not: like the woman who turned away her servant upon the controversy, Whether the house should be swept with a *besom* or with a *broom*."

"The partial teachers are the cause of this, while instead of opening the doctrine, and shewing in what sense we have or have not any *worthiness* or *merit*, they without distinction cry down *merit*, and reproach those that do otherwise. And if they do but say "Such a man, speaks for *merit* and *free will*," they think that they sufficiently rendered him odious to their followers, when yet all

sober

ſober Chriſtians in all ages have been for *merit* and *free-will* in a ſound ſenſe. And is not this to be adverſaries to truth, and love, and peace ?"

" I formerly thought, that tho' we agree in the *thing*, it is beſt to omit the *name*, becauſe the Papiſts have abuſed it: and I think ſo ſtill in ſuch companies, where the uſe of it not underſtood will ſcandalize men, and do more harm than good. But in other caſes, I *now* think it better to keep the word (1.) leſt we ſeem to the ignorant to be of another religion than † all the ancient churches were." (2.) Leſt we harden the Papiſts, Greeks and others, by denying ſound doctrine in *terms*, which they will think we deny in *ſenſe*. And (3.) Becauſe our penury of words is ſuch, that for my part I remember no-other word ſo fit to ſubſtitute inſtead of *merit*, *deſert* or *worthineſs*. The word *rewardableneſs* is long and harſh. But it is nothing elſe that we mean." *Baxter's end of doctrinal controverſies*, page 294.

I am glad that my honoured opponent, in the beginning of his

FOURTH LETTER,

does Mr. W. the juſtice to admit of the explanation I have given of that miſunderſtood aſſertion, " All who are convinced of ſin undervalue themſelves." Had you done otherwiſe, Sir, you would have ſhewn *judgment without mercy*. Nevertheleſs, you ſtill think that explanation *forced*; while many believe it not only natural, and *agreeable* to Mr. W's. whole plan of doctrine, but ſo *ſolid* that no arguments can overthrow it. If you turn to the ſecond check, page 44, you will ſee more clearly, that you do M. W. no favour in " diſmiſſing this article of the minutes."

But

† It is a great advantage to the Papiſts, ſays our judicious author that many Proteſtants wholly diſclaim the word *merit*, and ſimply deny the merit of goſpel-obedience. For hereupon the teachers ſhow their ſcholars, that all the fathers ſpeak for merit, and do tell them, that the Proteſtant doctrine is new and heretical, as being contrary to all the antient doctors: and when their ſcholars ſee it with their eyes, no wonder if they believe it, to our diſhonour.

But you prepare to attack the next with the utmoſt vigor. *A part of the minutes which you eſteem moſt contrary to ſound doctrine is*, ſay you, that "We are every hour and every moment pleaſing or diſpleaſing to God according to the whole of our inward tempers and outward behaviour, &c." And it is, I own, diametrically oppoſite to the favourite ſentiment which you thus expreſs, "Tho' I believe that David's SIN diſpleaſed the Lord, muſt I therefore believe that David's PERSON was under the curſe of the law?" (I ſuppoſe you mean *under God's diſpleaſure*, for of this Mr. W. ſpeaks, nor does he mention *the curſe of the law* in all the minutes) You boldly anſwer, "Surely no.—Like Ephraim he was ſtill a pleaſant child: tho' he went on frowardly" *in adultery and murder*, he did not loſe the character of the man after God's own heart." My dear Sir, you might as well have advanced at once that unguarded propoſition of Dr. Criſp, "God does no longer ſtand diſpleaſed, tho' a believer do ſin often: no ſin can poſſibly do him any hurt." Is this what you call "ſound doctrine?" And is that the *worſt part of the minutes*, which oppoſes ſuch a dangerous tenet? Then how *excellent* muſt the *other* parts be! Indeed, Sir, their vindicator could ſay nothing ſtronger to demonſtrate their ſoundneſs, ſeaſonableneſs and importance. But let us conſider your arguments; and that with ſuch care, as the importance of the ſubject requires.

I. "*David's* SIN *diſpleaſed the Lord*," but not "*his* PERSON." This is what you muſt mean if you oppoſe Mr. W's. propoſition. I like your ſhifting the terms; it is a ſign that you are a little aſhamed the world ſhould ſee the good Doctor's ſcheme without ſome covering. *Erubuiſti, ſalva res eſt.* (I.) Your intimation that the Lord was not diſpleaſed at *David's* PERSON, bears hard upon the equity and veracity of God. *David* commits adultery and murder in Jeruſalem, and *Claudius* in Rome. God ſees them, and ſays agreeably to your ſcheme, "They are both guilty of the ſame crimes,

crimes, and both impenitent: but David is a Jew, an elect, a sheep, and therefore, tho' he sins against *ten* times more light than the other, I am not at all displeased at him. But Claudius is an Heathen, a reprobate, a goat, and my anger smokes against him; he shall surely die."—If this is God's method, how can he make the following appeal! *O house of Israel are not* MY *ways equal? Are not* YOUR *ways unequal?—The soul that sinneth it shall die: wherefore turn ye, Why will ye die, O house of Israel?* See Ez. xviii. and 2d check, page 69.

(2.) Your distinction is overthrown by scripture; for we read Gen. xxxviii. 10. that *The thing which Onan did displeased the Lord.* "True, might you say upon your scheme, this is the very thing I assert; this mode of speech shews that God was angry at Onan's *sin*, and not at his *person*."—But this would be a great mistake, honoured Sir; for the sacred historian adds immediately, *Wherefore God slew him also:* He shewed his heavy displeasure as his *person* by punishing him with death, as well as his brother Er, who *was wicked in the sight of the Lord.*

(3.) But if you will not believe Mr. W. when he declares that God is displeased at the *persons* of the righteous, the moment they do those *things* which displease him, believe at least the oracles of God. *God's anger was kindled against Moses*, Ex. iv. 14.—*The Lord was very angry against Aron*, Deut. ix. 20. and with all Israel, witness those awful words, *let me alone, that I may consume them in a moment.* Isaiah, whom you allow to be an elect, says, *thou wast angry with* ME. God himself says, Is. xlvii. 6, *I was angry with my people*; and David, who frequently deprecates God's wrath in his penitential psalms, observes that *his anger smokes against the sheep of his pasture*, when they go astray. Ps. lxxiv. 1.

(4.) The new testament inculcates this doctrine as well as the old. St. Paul having reminded the believers of Ephesus, that *no whoremonger or covetous person hath an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and*

and of God, subjoins this seasonable caution: *let no man deceive you*: no not those good men, Dr. Crisp and the author of Pietas Oxonienſis: *for because of these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.*—Impossible! say those orthodox Protestants; you may be *children of disobedience*, not only unto *whoredom* and *covetousness*, but unto adultery and murder without fearing that the *wrath of God* will *come upon you for these things*: No, no, you will be "pleasant children still." See Vind. page 89.

II. You proceed: "Shall I believe that because David was ungrateful, God (whose "gifts and callings are without repentance) was unfaithful?" And shall I believe, that God is not as *faithful* when he accomplishes his *threatnings*, as when he fulfils his promises? You reply, "*God's gifts and callings are without repentance.*" And does this prove that God's *warnings* are *without meaning*, and his *threatnings without truth?* St. Paul spoke those words of the election of the Jews; and it is certain God does not *repent* that he formerly *called* them, and *gave* them the land of Canaan; any more then he *repents* his having now *rejected* them, and *taken from them* the good land which he gave their fathers: for as he had once sufficient reasons to do the one, so he has now to do the other.

But if you will make this passage mean, that the divine favour and blessings can never be forfeited through any fall into sin: I beg you will answer these queries. Had not God *given* all angels a place in his favour and glory? And did not many of them lose it by their fall? Was not innocent Adam interested in the divine favour and image? And did he not lose both, together with paradise, when he fell into sin? Did not king Saul forfeit the crown which God had *given* him, and the throne to which he had *called* him? Were not Judas's *calling* and apostleship forfeited by his unfaithfulness, as well as one of the twelve *thrones* which Christ had promised him? What will you say of the unprofitable servant, from whom his

lord took the talent unimproved? Loſt he not a bleſſing *given*, and his *calling to occupy* with it? And can you aſſert, that the man who took his fellow-ſervant by the throat did not loſe the *forgiveneſs of a debt of ten thouſand talents?* Or that thoſe apoſtates, who *tread under foot the blood of the covenant wherewith they were* SANCTIFIED. do not forfeit their SANCTIFICATION *by doing deſpite to the ſpirit of grace?* Is it right thus to ſet the author of the epiſtle to the Romans againſt the author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews?

III. Your bringing in *backſliding* EPHRAIM *the pleaſant child*, as a witneſs of the truth of your doctrine, is a moſt unhappy proof. *Rejoice not O Iſrael, as other people*, ſays the Lord, Hoſ. ix. 1, *for thou haſt gone a whoring from thy God.* This whoring Iſrael is called Ephraim *ver.* 13. *Ephraim*, the pleaſant child *is planted as a pleaſant plant.* Notwithſtanding, *Ephraim ſhall bring forth his children for the murderer. All their wickedneſs is in Gilgal: for there I* HATED *them. For the wickedneſs of their doings, I will drive them out of mine houſe; I will love them* NO MORE. Hence the Prophet obſerves immediately after, *Ephraim is ſmitten, my God will caſt them away, becauſe they did not hearken unto him.*

IV. However, my honoured friend ſtill affirms, that "David, notwithſtanding his horrible backſlidings, did not loſe the character of the man after God's own heart." But he will permit me to believe the contrary. (1.) Upon the teſtimony of the Pſalmiſt himſelf, who ſays in your favourite pſalm, *thou haſt caſt off and abhorred, thou haſt been very wroth with thine anointed: thou haſt made void the covenant of thy ſervant; thou haſt prophaned his crown by caſting it to the ground.* Pſ. lxxxix. 38.

(2.) Where is David called *the man after God's own heart*, while he continued an impenitent adulterer? How much more guarded is the ſcripture than your letters? *David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aſide,* SAVE *only in the matter of Uriah*, 1 Kings xv. 5. Here you ſee the immoral parentheſis of ten months ſpent in

in adultery and murder, expreſly pointed at, and excepted by the Holy Ghoſt.

(3.) David himſelf, far from thinking that ſin could never ſeparate between God and a *juſt man* who *draws back* into wickedneſs, ſpeaks thus in the laſt charge which he gave to Solomon; *and thou Solomon my ſon, know the God of thy father, and ſerve him with a perfect heart. If thou ſeek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forſake him he will caſt thee off forever.* 1. Chr xxviii. 9. Hence it appears that the God of *Solomon's father* is very different from the picture which Dr. Criſp draws of *David's God*. The former can be ſo diſpleaſed at an impenitent backſlider as to *caſt him off for ever*; while the latter accounts him *a pleaſant child ſtill*. But let us come to matter of fact.

(4.) Diſpleaſure, anger, or wrath in God, is not that diſturbing boiſterous paſſion ſo natural to fallen man; but an invariable diſapprobation of ſin, and a ſteady deſign to puniſh the ſinner. Now God ſeverely manifeſted this righteous diſpleaſure at David's perſon, when he puniſhed him by not reſtraining any longer the ambition of his rebellious ſon. How remarkably did his dreadful puniſhments anſwer his heinous crimes! He wanted the fruit of his adultery to live, but inflexible juſtice deſtroys it. *The crown* of righteouſneſs *was fallen from his head*, and his royal *crown is prophaned and caſt to the ground.*

He had not turned out *the way-fearing man*, the helliſh tempter; and he is turned out of his own palace and kingdom. He flies beyond Jordan for his life; and as he flies *Shimei throws ſtones at him*; vollies of *curſes* accompany the ſtones; and the moſt cutting challenges follow the curſes: *Come out, thou bloody man*, ſaid he, *thou man of Belial; the Lord hath delivered thy kingdom into the hand of Abſalom thy ſon; and behold thou art taken in thy miſchief, becauſe thou art a bloody man.* To which David could anſwer nothing, but "*Let him curſe; for the Lord*, by not reſtraining his wickedneſs, *hath* permiſſively *ſaid unto him, Curſe David.* I ſee

 the

the impartial juſtice of a ſin-avenging God, through the cruel abuſe of this raging man." This was not all: He had *ſecretly* committed *adultery* with Uriah's wife, and his ſon *publickly* commits *inceſt* with his own wives. And to compleat the horror of his puniſhment, he leaves the moſt dreadful curſe upon his poſterity. *Thou haſt ſlain Uriah with the ſword of the children of Ammon*, ſays the Lord, *now therefore the ſword ſhall* NEVER *depart from thy houſe*, and thy own children ſhall murder one another. What a terrible puniſhment was this? And how ſtrong muſt be the prejudice of thoſe, who maintain that God was not diſpleaſed at David's *perſon!*

V. Paſs we now to an argument, which you ſeem to conſider as one of the main pillars of your doctrine. "If one believer ſin by an unclean thought, ſay you, and another by an unclean act, does the former continue in a ſtate of grace, and the other forfeit his ſonſhip? Take heed leſt you ſhould be forced to go to Rome for an anſwer to this query." Without going even to the convent of the Benedictine monks in Paris, I anſwer, it is evident from ſcripture, that an adulterous thought delighted in is adultery. He that entertains ſuch a thought is an adulterer, one who is abſolutely unfit for the preſence of an holy God. *Be not deceived*, ſays St. Paul, *neither fornicators nor adulterers ſhall inherit the kingdom of God.* Therefore adultery of heart certainly excludes an impenitent backſlider out of heaven; though it will not ſink him into ſo deep a hell, as if he had drawn another into the commiſſion of his intended crime. You add,

"But if David had only had an angry thought, he had ſtill been a murderer in the ſight of God." Not ſo; for there is a righteous anger, which is a virtue and not a ſin; or elſe how could Chriſt have *looked round about on the Phariſees with anger*, and continued ſinleſs? You mean probably, that if David had only *hated* Uriah in his heart he would have been a murderer. If ſo, your obſervation is very juſt, for *he that hateth his brother*, ſays St. John,

is a MURDERER; *and you know*, adds he, *that* NO *murderer*, though he were a royal pſalmiſt, *hath eternal life abiding in him.*

But what do you get by theſe arguments? Nothing at all. You only make it eaſier to prove that your doctrine is erroneous. For if David would have forfeited heaven by *looking on Uriah's wife, to luſt after her in his heart*; or by intending in his breaſt to murder her huſband; how much more did he forfeit it when mental ſins fully ripened into outward enormities!——*Ye are of your father the devil whoſe works ye do*, ſaid Chriſt to ſome of the choſen nation: and if adultery and murder are works of the devil, it follows from thoſe words of our Lord, that while David continued impenitent, he was NOT *a man after God's own heart*, as my honoured opponent too charitably ſuppoſes; but a man after the own heart of him, *who abode not in the truth, and is a murderer from the beginning.*

VI. But you add, "Sin did not reign in him as a king, it only for a time uſurped as a tyrant." Nay, Sir, ſin is a *tyrant* wherever he *reigns*, and he reigns wherever he *uſurps*. "Where will you draw the line," between the reign and the tyranny of Sin? Are not both included under the word *dominion? Sin* ſays St. Paul, *ſhall not have* DOMINION *over you* that *are under grace.* Had I made ſuch a *diſtinction* as this, ſome proteſtants, would deſervedly have called it *metaphyſical*; but as it comes from the orthodox author of Pietas Oxonienſis it will probably paſs for *evangelical.*

Very different however is St. Peter's orthodoxy. *Of whom a man is overcome*, ſays he, *of the ſame is he brought into bondage. For if after they have eſcaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worſe with them than the beginning.* Nevertheleſs even ſuch apoſtates, ſo long as *the day of their viſitation* laſteth, may again repent and believe; for as you juſtly obſerve, they *have* ſtill *an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous.*

VII. You try to prove your point by ſcripture. *There is*, ſay you, *no condemnation to them who are in Chriſt.* True! but it is while they *walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit*; a clauſe which you prudently keep out of ſight. And ſurely David walked after the fleſh, when in the act of adultery and murder.—You proceed "*who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?*" Nobody, if God's elect are penitent believers, *who walk not after the fleſh*; but if they are *impenitent adulterers and hypocritical murderers*; Jews and Gentiles, Law and Goſpel, Prophets and Apoſtles, God and their own conſcience, ALL will agree to lay their crimes to their charge.—You urge that "*Chriſt by one offering hath for ever perfected them that are ſanctified.*" True! but not thoſe who are *unſanctified.* And certainly ſuch are all adulterers and murderers. Theſe ought rather to be ranked with thoſe who *tread under foot the blood of the covenant wherewith they* WERE *ſanctified.*

"It is ſaid, however, *ye* (believing, loving, fruitful Coloſſians, ſee Chap. i. 4, 6,) *are complete in him.*" It is ſo; but not ye impenitent backſliders, ye unclean defilers of another's bed. Such are *compleat in evil* not in *good*, in *Belial* not in *Chriſt.* Alas for the proſtitution of the ſacred and pure word of God! Can it alſo be preſſed into the ſervice of profaneneſs and impurity! To reſcue at leaſt one ſentence from ſuch manifeſt abuſe I might obſerve, the original may, with the greateſt propriety be rendered "*filled with* (or by) *him*," inſtead of *compleat in him*; and I think the context fixes this ſenſe upon it. The apoſtle is cautioning the Coloſſians againſt vain philoſophers, whoſe doctrine was empty and deceitful. Now that he may do this the more effectually, he points out a more excellent teacher, whoſe character and qualifications be deſcribes when he ſays, *in him dwelleth the fullneſs* πλήρωμα, *of the Godhead.* He immediately adds πεπληρωμένοι ἐν αὐτῷ. (a verb of the ſame etymology with the noun and undoubtedly of a ſimilar import) *ye are filled with* (or by) *him.*

him. As if he had ſaid "Chriſt is filled with the Godhead of the Father, and ye with the ſpirit of Chriſt, the ſpirit of wiſdom, righteouſneſs, and ſtrength." Plenitudo Chriſti (ſays the learned and pious Bengelius on the paſſage) redundat in eccleſiam, "the fullneſs of God dwelleth in the Mediator and overflows upon his church." The very ſenſe our tranſlators have given the very ſame two words in Epheſ. iii. 19. Why they rendered them differently here is hard to ſay.

VIII. You go on, "no falls or backſlidings in God's children, can ever bring them again under condemnation, becauſe *the law of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus hath made them free from the law of ſin and death.*" A moſt dangerous propoſition, expoſed Vind. page 88, and contrary to the very ſcripture by which you try to ſupport it. (1.) To the context, where thoſe to whom *there is no condemnation*, are ſaid to be perſons who *walk not after the fleſh*, and are therefore very different from impenitent adulterers and murderers, who bring forth the moſt execrable fruits of the fleſh. (2.) To the text itſelf; for if *the law*, or power *of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus hath made the* believer *free from the law*, or power *of ſin*; how can he be repreſented as the ſame *ſervant of ſin*;—as ſold under ſin—ſold under *adultery and murder* for ten months! But you are not at a loſs for an anſwer.

IX. "We are very apt, ſay you, to ſet up mountainous diſtinctions concerning the various degrees of ſin, eſpecially of ſins after converſion:" This, together with your placing "an angry thought" upon a level with deliberate murder, ſeems to inſinuate that you make very little difference between an atrocious crime and a ſin of ſurprize; ſo that, upon your ſcheme, a bloody murderer may plead that he is not more guilty, than a man who has felt a motion of impatience; and the latter may be hurried out of his wits, as if he had committed murder. To remove this miſtake, I need only obſerve, that if all are papiſts who make a material difference between various ſins, or between the

ſame

same sins variously aggravated, my worthy opponent is as sound a papist as myself: for when he acts as a magistrate, he does not promiscuously pass the same sentence upon every one. He commits one to prison, and dismisses another with a gentle reprimand. Our Lord himself sets you the example. Pharisees *shall receive the* GREATER *damnation*, and that *it shall be* MORE TOLERABLE *for Sodom than for Corazin in the day of judgment*: whence we may justly infer, that the sin of some is more "mountainous" than that of others.

But as you have made choice of David's case, permit me to argue from his experience. He was once, you know, violently angry with Nabal: but as he seasonably restrained his anger, and soothly confessed his sin, God forgave him without breaking his bones." Not so when the unrestrained evil of his heart in the matter of Uriah produced the external fruits of treachery and murder. For *then* the Lord inflicted upon him all the dreadful punishments which we have already considered. *Hear the rod* therefore, and learn what *vast* difference the Lord makes between sins whether committed after, or before conversion.

X. What follows is a sweet and smooth Antinomian pill, so much the more dangerous as it is gilt with gold taken from the sanctuary, from *the golden altar* itself. Hence it is that multitudes swallow it down as *rich grace* without the least scruple or suspicion. Lord, dart a beam of thy wisdom into the mind of thy servant, that I may separate the precious from the vile, and expose the dangerous ingredient without depreciating the gold that covers it!

"What is all sin, do you say, before the infinitely precious atoning blood of Jesus?" Nothing at all, when that blood is humbly apprehended by penitent believers who depart from all iniquity. But, when it is *accounted a common thing*, and *trodden under foot* by impenitent apostates; or wantonly pleaded in defence of sin by loose Nicolaitans or lukewarm Laodiceans, it does not answer its gracious

cious design. On the contrary, *how shall we escape*, says St. Paul, *if we* thus *neglect such great salvation!* And *of how much sorer punishment* than others *shall they be thought worthy who do* such *despite to the spirit of grace!* see Heb. ii. 5, and x. 29. You go on,

"If Christ has fulfilled the whole law and borne the curse, then all debts and claims against his people, be they more or be they less, be they small or be they great, be they before, or be they after conversion, are for ever and for ever cancelled. All trespasses are forgiven them.—They are justified from all things.—They already have everlasting life." What! before they repent and believe! A bold assertion this! which sets Jesus against Christ—our PRIEST against our PROPHET. For Christ himself teaches us that many for whom his *fatlings are killed*, and *all things are now ready*, thro' an obstinate refusal of his *sincere* (I hope no body will say *hypocritical*) invitations, *shall never taste of his supper*. And as if this was not enough to arm us against your doctrine, he commissioned an apostle to assure his church, that some who have *tasted* of his gospel-supper, that is, who *have been enlightened, have tasted the heavenly gift, the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come*, do *crucify to themselves the son of God afresh*, and by that mean, so totally *fall away*, that *it is impossible to renew them again to repentance*. A clear proof this that those who *once* truly *repented*, and were even *made partakers of the Holy Ghost*, may *quench the Spirit* and *sin against the Holy Ghost*, may not only fall, but fall finally, Heb. vi. 4.

(2.) Your doctrine sets also our high PRIEST against our heavenly KING, who declares, that if he who was once his faithful servant, *begins to beat his fellow servants*, much more to murder them, he will, as judge of all, command him to be *bound hand and foot, and delivered to the tormentors*. See 2d check, page 4.

(3.) Your doctrine drags after it all the absurdities of eternal, absolute justification. It sets aside the use of repentance and faith, in order to pardon and

and acceptance. It represents the sins of the elect as forgiven, not only before they are confessed, but even before they are committed; a notion which that strong Calvinist Dr. Owen himself could not but oppose. It supposes that all the penitents who have believed that they were once *children of wrath*, and that God was displeased at them when they lived in sin, have believed a lie. It makes the preaching of the gospel one of the most absurd, wicked and barbarous things in the world. For what can be more absurd than to say *repent ye and believe the gospel, he that believeth not shall be damned*, if a certain number can *never repent or believe*, and a certain number can *never* be damned? And what can be more *wicked*, than to distress elect sinners by bidding them *fly from the wrath to come*, if there is absolutely *no wrath*, neither past, present, nor *to come* for them, if all their sins "be they more or less, be they small or great, are for ever and for ever cancelled?" As for the reprobates, how *barbarous* is it to bid them fly, if adamantine chains, eternal decrees of past wrath, perpetually bind them down, that they may never escape the repeated eternal strokes of *the wrath to come?*

(4.) But what shocks me most in your scheme, is the reproach which it unavoidably fixes upon Christ. It says, The elect are justified from all things even before they believe. In all their sins "God views them *without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing:* they stand always compleat in the everlasting righteousness of the Redeemer." "*Black in themselves*, they are comely thro' his comeliness:" so that when they commit adultery and murder, "*He who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*, can nevertheless address them with, *Thou art all fair, my love, my undefiled, there is no spot in thee.*"

What a prostitution of the word of God is here! We blame a wild youth for dropping some bold innuendos about Jupiter in a play composed by a poor Heathen. But I acquit thee of innocency, O Terence, if a vindicator of Christian piety, has a right to represent our holy and righteous God,

as

as saying to a bloody adulterer in flagranti delicto, *Thou art all fair my love, my undefiled, there is no spot in thee.* And are these the fat pastures and lymped waters, where gospel-preachers "feed the sheep?" Where then! Oh where are the "barren pastures and muddled waters" in which barefaced Antinomians feed the goats? Is not this taking the children's bread to cast it to dogs? I had almost asked, *Is it not the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place?* See ye not the Lord, O ye mistaken Christians, looking down from the habitation of his holiness? And do ye not hear him thunder this expostulation from heaven? *How long will ye blaspheme mine honour, and have such pleasure in deceit! Know* ye not that I *have chosen to myself the man that is godly*, and that *him who delighteth in iniquity doth my soul abhor?*

(5.) And plead not, dear Sir, that you have quoted scripture in defence of your point. If the church says in a mystical song "*I am black* in the eyes of the world, *because the sun* of affliction and persecution *hath looked upon me* while I *kept the vineyards;* but *I am comely* in the sight of God whose spirit enables me with unwearied patience to *bear the burden and heat of the day*;" you have absolutely no right, either from divinity or criticism, to make those words mean as they do upon your scheme, *I am black* by the atrocious crimes which I actually commit, black by the horrors of adultery and murder; but no matter; *I am comely* by the purity and chastity of my Saviour: my sins, be they small or be they great, are for ever and for ever cancelled; I am justified from all things.--Again, if God says to a soul actually *washed, walking with him* as *Enoch*, and *walking in white*, as the *few names in Sardis* who *had not defiled their garments*, "*Thou art all fair, my undefiled:*" is it right to take those gracious words, and apply them to every lukewarm Laodicean we meet with: and to every apostate, who not only *defiles his garments*, but *wallows in* the *mire* like *the sow that was washed.*

(6.) Another great, and if I am not mistaken, insurmountable

insurmountable difficulty attends your scheme. You tell us that "a believer's person stands absolved and always compleat in the everlasting righteousness of the Redeemer." But I ask, Was he absolved *before* he was a believer? If you answer, "No, he was absolved the moment he began to believe," it follows that he *does something*, that is, he *believes* towards his absolution. And thus your main pillars, that faith is not previous to justification, that there is no wrath in God for the elect, and that all claims against his people before or after conversion are for ever cancelled," are not only broken, but ground to powder. Add to this that if the believer is justified in consequence of his faith, it is evident that his justification while he is on earth, can stand no longer than his faith, and that if he *makes shipwreck of faith and a good conscience as Hymeneus*, he must again *come into condemnation*. But supposing that to avoid these inconveniencies you boldly say, "He was justified from the time *the Lamb was slain*, that is *from the beginning of the world*." You point-blank contradict Christ, who says that *he who believeth not is condemned already*. Thus either the veracity of our Lord, or the truth of your doctrine must go to the bottom. A sad dilemma this, for those who confound Crispianity with Christianity!

XI. You reply, "As soon shall Satan pluck Christ's crown from his head, as his purchase from his hand." Hence is *a great truth*, making way for a *palpable error*, and a *dreadful insinuation*. Let us (1.) see the *great truth*. It is most certain that no body shall ever be able to *pluck* Christ's *sheep*, that is, penitent believers, who *hear his voice and follow him*, out of his protecting almighty hand. But if *the minds* of those penitent believers *are corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ*; if they *wax wanton against him, turn after Satan, end in the flesh*, and *draw back to perdition*; if *growing fat and kicking* like *Jeshurun*, they *neigh* like high-fed horses *after their neighbours wives*; we demand proof that they belong to the fold of Christ, and are not rather

goats

goats and *wolves in sheep's cloathing*, who *cannot* without conversion *enter into the kingdom of heaven.* (2.) The *palpable error* is, that none of *those for whom Christ died* can *be cast away* and *destroyed*, that no *virgin's lamp* can *go out*, no promising harvest be *choaked with thorns*, no *branch in Christ cut off* for unfruitfulness. no pardon forfeited, and no *name blotted out of God's book*—That no *salt* can *lose its savour*, nobody *receive the grace of God in vain*, *bury his talent*, *neglect such great salvation*, trifle away *a day of visitation*, *look back after setting his hand to the plow*, and *grieve the Spirit* till he is *quenched*, and *strives no* more. This error so conducive to the Laodicean case, is expressly opposed by St. Peter, who informs us that some *deny the Lord that* BOUGHT *them*, *and bring upon themselves swift destruction.* And Christ himself, far from desiring to keep his lukewarm *purchase* in HIS HAND, declares that *he will spue it out of* HIS MOUTH, Rev. iii. 16.

Pass we on (3.) to the *dreadful insinuation.* While you perpetually try to comfort *a few elect*, some of whom, for what I know, comfort themselves already with their neighbours' wives, yea, and the wives of their fathers; please to tell us how we shall comfort *millions of reprobates*, who, for what you know, try to *save themselves from this adulterous generation.* Do ye not hear how Satan, upon a supposition of the truth of your doctrine, triumphs over those unhappy victims of what some call God's sovereignty? While that old murderer shakes his bloody hand over the myriads devoted to endless torments, methinks I hear him say to his fellow-executioners of divine vengeance, *As soon shall Christ's crown be plucked from his head*, *as* this his free gift *from* my *hand.* Let yonder little flock of the elect commit adultery and incest *without any possibility of missing heaven.* I object no more. See what crowds of reprobates may pray and reform, and strive *without any possibility* of escaping hell. Let those gay elect shout *everlasting love! eternal justification* and *finished salvation!* I consent! See, ye fiends, see the immense prey that awaits

us, and roar with me before-hand *Everlasting wrath! eternal reprobation!* and *finished damnation!*

XII. "Our xiith article maintains that good works necessarily spring out of a lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by its fruits." "*This* you say *I most firmly believe*;" And nevertheless, to prove just the contrary, to shew that when David committed adultery and murder he had a *lively faith*, and was *in a state of justification and sanctification*, you quote a verse of a hymn, composed by the Rev. Mr. C. Wesley, which only confirms what I say of *undervaluing*, vind. page 83. But you mistake him, if you suppose that when *Not* ONE *bud of grace appears* to ourselves, *many* may not appear *to others*; and if you apply to outward enormities greedily committed, what the poet means of inward motions of sin cordially lamented and steadily opposed. Nevertheless, as some expressions in this hymn are not properly guarded, the pious author will forgive me if I transcribe part of a letter which I lately received from him.

"I was once on the brink of Antinomianism, by unwarily reading Crisp and Saltmarsh. Just then warm in my first love, I was in the utmost danger, when providence threw in my way Baxter's treatise intitled, *An hundred errors of Dr. Crisp demonstrated.* My brother was sooner apprehensive of the dangerous abuse which would be made of our ungarded hymns and expressions, than I was. Now I also see and feel we must all sink—unless we call St. James to our assistance. Yet let us still insist as much or more than ever on St. Paul's justification. What God has joined together let no man put asunder. The great Chillingworth saw clearly the danger of separating St. James from St. Paul. He used to wish that whenever a chapter of St. Paul's justification was read, another of St. James might be read at the same time."

XIII. When my honoured correspondent has endeavoured

endeavoured to prove by the above mentioned ſcriptures, arguments and quotations, that an impenitent adulterer and murderer, inſtead of being under God's diſpleaſure, is "a pleaſant child ſtill;" to compleat his work, he proceeds to ſhew the good that falls into ſin do to believers. Never did the pious author of *Pietas Oxonienſis* employ his pen in a work leſs conducive to piety!

"God, ſays he, often brings about his purpoſes by thoſe very means, which to the human eye would certainly defeat them. He has always the ſame thing in view, his own glory and the ſalvation of his elect by Jeſus Chriſt. This Adam was accompliſhing when he put the whole world under the curſe." Hail Adam under the fatal tree! Pluck and eat abundantly, for "thou accompliſheſt the ſalvation of the elect!" Oh the inconſiſtency of your doctrine! If we inſiſt upon *doing the will of God* in order *to enter his kingdom*, we are boldly exclaimed againſt as proudly ſharing the glory of our redemption with Chriſt. But here Adam is repreſented as his partner in the work of ſalvation, and a ſhare of his glory, poſitively aſſigned to the fall, i. e. to his diſobedience to the divine will. St. Paul aſſerts that *by one man* (Adam) *came death*, and *ſin the ſting of death; and ſo death* with his ſting *paſſed upon all men*. But you inform us that Adam by his ſin "accompliſhed the ſalvation of the elect." If this is not plucking a jewel from Chriſt's crown, to adorn the moſt improper head in the world next to that of Satan, I am very much miſtaken.

But if God "*brought about* HIS *purpoſe*" concerning *the ſalvation of the elect* by the fall of Adam; tell us, I pray, who brought about the purpoſe concerning *the damnation of the reprobates?* Had the Lord "*always* this *thing in view*" alſo? On the brink of what a dreadful abyſs hath your doctrine brought me?—Sir, my mind recoils; I fly from the God whoſe unprovoked wrath roſe before the beginning of the world, againſt millions of his unformed, and therefore guiltleſs creatures! He that *taſted death for every man* bids me fly, and he

points me from Dr. Crisp to *God* whose *mercy is over all his works*, till they personally forfeit it by obstinately trampling upon his richest grace.

XIV. As if it was not enough to have represented our salvation in part *accomplished* by the transgression of our first parents: you bring in *Herod and Pontius Pilate*, and observe, to the honour of the good which sin does to the elect, that those unrighteous judges *did whatsoever God's hand and council determined before to be done.* If you quote this passage to insinuate that God pre-determined their *sin*, you reflect upon divine holiness, and apologize for the murderers of our Lord, as you have for the murderer of Uriah.

I grant, that when God saw, in the light of his infinite fore-knowledge, that Pilate and Caiaphas would absolutely chuse injustice and cruelty; he *determined* that they should have the awful opportunity of exercising them against his Anointed. As a skilful pilot, without pre-determining and raising a contrary wind, foresees it will rise, and pre-determines so to manage the rudder and sails of his ship, as to make it answer a good purpose. So God over-ruled the foreseen wickedness of those men, and made it subservient to his merciful justice in offering up the true paschal Lamb. But, as it would be very absurd to ascribe to the *contrary wind* the praise due to the *pilot's skill*: so it is very unevangelical to ascribe to the sin of Pilate, or of Joseph's brethren, the good which God drew from some of it's extraordinary circumstances.

XV. "The Lord has promised to make *all things work for good to those that love him*—and if all things, then their very sins and corruptions are included in the royal promise." A syren song this! which you unhappily try to support by scripture. But (1.) if *this is the* LOVE *of God that we keep his commandments*, how will you prove that David *loved God*, when he left his own wife for that of Uriah? Does not our Lord declare that those who will not *forsake husband, wife, children and all things for his sake, are not worthy of him*, either

either as believers or lovers? And are those *worthy of him* who break his commandment, and take their neighbours' *wives?* Again, if St. John speaking of one who does not relieve an indigent brother, asks with indignation, *How dwelleth the love of God in* HIM! May not I with greater reason say, *How dwelt the love of God in* DAVID! Who, far from afflicting Uriah, murdered his soul by drunkenness, and his body with the sword! And if David did *not* love God, how can you believe that a promise made *to those that love God*, respected him in his state of impenitency!—(2.) When *we* extol free grace, and declare that *God's mercy is over* ALL *his works*, you directly answer, that the word ALL must be taken in a limited sense: but when *you* extol the profitableness of sin, ALL, in ALL *things working for good*, must be taken universally, and include *sin and corruption*, contrary to the context. —(3.) I say, contrary to the *context;* for just before the apostle declares, *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*, ye shall evidence the truth of Ezekiel's doctrine, *When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, in his sin that he hath sinned shall he die*—and at the end of the chapter *the things that work for good* are innumerated, and they conclude *all tribulations and creatures*, but not our own sin, unless you can prove it to be God's creature, and not the devil's production.—(4.) It is no where promised that sin shall do us good. On the contrary, God constantly represents it as the greatest evil in the world, the root of all other temporal and eternal evils: and as he makes it the object of his invariable disapprobation, so, till they repent, he levels his severest threatnings at sinners without respect of persons. But the author of Pietas Oxonienſis has made a new discovery. Thro' the glass of Dr. Crisp he sees that one of the choicest promises in scripture respects the commission of sin, of theft and incest, adultery and murder. So grosly are threatnings and promises, punishments and rewards, confounded together by this fashionable divinity!

(5.) I grant that in some cases the *punishment* inflicted upon a sinner has been over-ruled for good: but what is this to the *sin itself?* Is it reasonable to ascribe to *sin* the good that may spring from the *rod* with which sin is punished? Some robbers have perhaps been brought to repentance by the gallows, and others deterred from committing robbery by the terror of their punishment; but by what rule in logic or divinity can we infer from thence either that any robbers love God, or that *all* robberies shall work together for their good.

But "Onesimus robbed Philemon his master; and flying from justice was brought under Paul's preaching and converted." Surely, Sir, you do not insinuate, that Onesimus's conversion depended upon robbing his master! Or that it would not have been better for him to have served his master faithfully, and stayed in Asia to hear the gospel with Philemon, than to have rambled to Rome for it in consequence of his crime! The Heathens said, *let us eat and drink for to morrow we die.* It will be well if some do not say upon a fairer prospect then theirs, "Let us *steal* and rob, for to-morrow we shall be *converted.*"

XVII. You add, that "the royal and holy seed was continued by the incest of Judah with Tamar, and the adultery of David with Bathsheba." And do you really think, Sir, God made choice of that line to shew how incest and adultery *work together for good?* For my part, I rather think that it was because if he had chosen any other line, he would have met with *more* such blots. You know that God slew David's child conceived in adultery; and if he chose Solomon to succeed David, it was not because the adulterous Bathsheba was his mother, but because he was then the *best* of David's children: for I may say of God's chusing the son, what Samuel said of his chusing the father, *The Lord looketh on the heart,* 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

XVIII. You proceed in your enumeration of the good that sin does to the pleasant children. "How

"How has many a poor soul who has been faithless thro' fear of man, even blessed God for Peter's denial!" Surely, Sir, you mistake: none but the fiend who desired to have *Peter that he might sift him*, could bless God for the apostle's crime; nor could any one on such a horrid account bless any other God but *the god of this world*. David said, *My eyes run down with water, because men keep not thy law*; but the author of Pietas Oxonienſis tells us, that "many a poor soul has blessed God" for the most horrid breaches of his law! Weep no more, perfidious apostle: thou hast *cast the net on the right side of the ship*; thy three *curses* have procured God multitudes of *blessings!* Surely, Sir, you cannot mean this! "Many a poor soul has blessed God" *for granting a pardon to Peter*, but never *for Peter's denial*. It is extremely dangerous thus to confound a crime, with the pardon granted to a penitent criminal.

XIX. Upon the same principle you add, "How have many others been raised out of the mire, by considering the tenderness shewn to the incestuous Corinthian." I am glad you do not say "by considering the *incest* of the Corinthian." The good received by *many* did not then spring from his horrid crime, but from the *tenderness* of the apostle. This instance therefore, by your own confession, does not prove that sin does any good to believers.

But as you tell us with what *tenderness* the apostle *restored that man*, when he was *swallowed up in godly sorrow*, you will permit me to remind you of the *severity* which he shewed him while he continued impenitent. *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, said he, *when ye are gathered together, deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord*. Hence it appears, the apostle thought his case so desperate, that his body must be solemnly delivered to Satan, in order if possible to bring his soul to repentance. Now if the incestuous man's sins "had been for ever and for ever cancelled;" if he had

not

not forfeited the divine favour, and cut himself off from *the general assembly of the first-born* by his crime; what power could the apostle, who acted under the influence of the Spirit, have had to cut him off from the visible church as a corrupt member? What right to deliver the body of one of "God's pleasant children" to destruction? Was this *finished salvation?* For my part, as I do not believe in a *two-fold*, I had almost said *jesuitical* will in God, I am persuaded, he would have us consider things as they are; an impenitent adulterer as a profligate heathen, and a penitent believer as "his pleasant child."

XX. You add, (1.) a "grievous fall serves to make believers know their place." No indeed, it serves only to make them *forget* their place; witness David, who, far from *knowing* his place, wickedly took that of Uriah; and Eve, who by falling into the condemnation of the devil, took her Maker's place, in her imagination, and esteemed herself as wise *as God*.--(2.) "It drives them nearer to Christ." Surely you mistake, Sir; you mean nearer the devil; for a fall into pride may drive me nearer Lucifer, a fall into adultery and murder may drive me nearer Belial and Moloch; but not nearer Jesus Christ.—(3) "It makes them more dependent on his strength." No such thing. The genuine effect of a fall into sin, is to stupify the conscience and harden the heart; witness the state of obduracy in which God found Adam, and the state of carnal security in which Nathan found David, after their crimes.—(4.) "It keeps them more watchful for the future." Just the reverse: it prevents their watching for the future. If David had been made more watchful by falling into adultery, would he have fallen into treachery and murder? If Peter had been made more watchful by his *first* fall into perjury would he have fallen *three* times successively!—(5.) "It will cause them to sympathize with others in the like situation." By no means. A fall into sin will naturally make us desirous of drawing another into our

our guilty condition. Witneſs the Devil and Eve, Eve and Adam, David and Bathſheba. The royal adulterer was ſo far from ſympathizing with the man who had unkindly taken his neighbour's favourite *ew lamb*, that he directly ſwore *As the Lord liveth, the man that has done this thing ſhall ſurely die.*

(6.) "It will make them ſing louder to the praiſe of reſtoring grace throughout all the ages of eternity." I demand proof of this. I greatly queſtion whether Demas, Alexander the copper-ſmith, Hymeneus, Philetus, and many of the fallen believers mentioned in the epiſtles of our Lord to the churches of Aſia, in the epiſtle to the Hebrews, and in thoſe of St. Peter, St James, and St. Jude ſhall ſing reſtoring grace at all. The apoſtle far from repreſenting them ſinging LOUDER, gives us to underſtand that many of them ſhall be *thought worthy of a much* SORER *puniſhment* than the ſinners conſumed by fire from heaven; and that *there remaineth no* MORE *ſacrifice for their ſins:* (a ſure proof that Chriſt's ſacrifice availed for them, till they *accounted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing*) *for*, adds the apoſtle, *the Lord will judge his people*; and notwithſtanding all that Dr. Criſp ſays to the contrary, *there remaineth* for apoſtates *a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which ſhall devour the adverſaries. Weeping, wailing, gnaſhing of teeth*, and not "louder ſongs," await the *unprofitable ſervant.*

But ſuppoſing ſome are *renewed to repentance* and *eſcape out of the ſnare of the devil*; can you imagine they will be upon the footing of thoſe, who, ſtanding *ſtedfaſt* and *immoveable, always abounded in the work of the Lord?* Shall then the *labour of theſe be in vain in the Lord?* Are not our works to follow us? Shall the unprofitable ſervant, if reſtored, receive a crown of glory equal to his, who from the time he liſted *has always fought the good fight, and kept the faith?* The doctrine you would inculcate at once bears hard upon the equity of the divine conduct, and ſtrikes a fatal blow at the root

of

of all diligence and faithfulneſs, ſo ſtrongly recommended in the oracles of God.

You will be ſenſible of your error if you obſerve, that all the fine things which you tell us of a *fall into ſin*, belong not to the *fall*, but to *a happy recovery from it*: and my honoured correſpondent is as much miſtaken, when he aſcribes to *ſin* the effect of *repentance* and *faith*, as if he aſcribed to a froſt the effect of a thaw, or to ſickneſs the conſequence of a recovery.

And now that we have ſeen how you have done a *pious* man's ſtrange work; permit me Sir, to tell you that thro' the prevalence of human corruption, a word ſpoken for ſin generally goes farther than ten thouſand ſpoken againſt it. This I know, that if a fall, in an hour of temptation, appears only half ſo *profitable* as you repreſent it, thouſands will venture after David into the whirl-pool of wickedneſs. But alas! *facilis deſcenſus averni*, &c. it is eaſier to follow him when he plunges in, than when he ſtruggles out with his *eyes waſted*, his *fleſh dried up*, and his *bones broken*.

XXI. I gladly do you the juſtice, honoured Sir, to obſerve that you exclaim againſt ſin in the next page; but does not the antidote come too late? You ſay, "Whatever may be God's ſecret will, we are to keep cloſe to the declaration of his own written word, which binds us to reſiſt ſin." But alas! you make a bad matter worſe by repreſenting God as having two wills, a *ſecret* effectual *will* that we ſhould ſin, and a revealed will, or *written word*, commanding us to reſiſt ſin! If theſe inſinuations are juſt, I aſk, Why ſhould we not regard God's *ſecret*, as much as his *revealed will*? Nay, why ſhould we not regard it *more*, ſince it is the *more efficacious*, and conſequently the *ſtronger will*?

You add, "He would be mad who ſhould wilfully fall down, and break a leg or an arm, becauſe he knew there was a ſkilful ſurgeon at hand to ſet it." But I beg leave to diſſent from my honoured opponent. For, ſuppoſing I had a crooked leg,

appointed

appointed to be broken *for good* by God's *secret will* intimated to me: and supposing a dear friend strongly argued, not only that the surgeon is at hand, but that he would render my leg straiter, handsomer, and stronger than before: must I not be a fool, or a coward, if I hesitate throwing myself down?

O Sir, if the *deceitfulness of sin* is so great, that thousands greedily commit it, when the gallows on earth, and horrible torments in hell, are proposed for their just wages; how will they be able to escape in the hour of temptation, if they are encouraged to transgress the divine law, by assurances, that they shall reap eternal advantages from their sin! Oh! how highly necessary was it, that Mr. W. should warn his assistants against talking of a *state of justification and sanctification*, in so unguarded a manner as you, Sir, and the other admirers of Dr. Crisp so frequently do?

You conclude this letter by some quotations from Mr. Wesley, whom you vainly try to press into the Doctor's service, by representing him as saying of established Christians what he speaks of babes in Christ, and of the commission of adultery and murder what he only means of evil desire resisted, and evil tempers restrained: but more of this in a *Treatise on Christian Perfection*.

Your FIFTH LETTER

begins by a civil reproof, for "speaking rather in a sneering manner of that heart-chearing expression so often used by awakened divines, *the finished salvation* OF CHRIST:" an expression which, by the bye, you will not find once in all my letters. But why some divines, whom you look upon as unawakened, do not admire the unscriptural expression of *finished* salvation, you may see 2d check, page 81.

I am thankful for your second reproof, and hope it will make me more careful not to "speak as a man of the world." But the third I really cannot thank you for. "You are not very sparing of

hard

hard names againſt Dr. Criſp," ſays my honoured correſpondent; and again, "The hard names, and heavy cenſures thrown out againſt the Doctor, are by far more unjuſtifiable than what has been delivered againſt Mr. W." The hardeſt names I give to your favourite divine are, *the Doctor*, *the good Doctor*, and *the honeſt Doctor*, whom notwithſtanding all his miſtakes, I repreſent (2 check, page 24) as a good man ſhouting aloud *Salvation to the Lamb of God*. Now, Sir, I ſhould be glad to know by what rule, either of *criticiſm* or *charity*, you can prove that theſe are *hard names*, *more unjuſtifiable than* the names of "papiſt unmaſked, heretic, apoſtate, worſe than papiſts," &c. which have been of late ſo liberally beſtowed upon Mr. W.

I confeſs that thoſe branches of Dr. Criſp's doctrine which ſtand in direct oppoſition to the practical goſpel of Chriſt, I have taken the liberty to call *Criſpianity*; for had I called them *Chriſtianity*, my conſcience and one half of the bible would have flown in my face: and had I called them *Calviniſm*, Williams, Flavel, Allen, Biſhop Hopkins, and numbers of *ſound Calviniſts*, would have proved me miſtaken; for they agree to repreſent the peculiarities of the Doctor, as *looſe Antinomian tenets*; and if any man can prove them either *legal* or *evangelical*, I ſhall gladly recant thoſe epithets, which I have ſometimes given, not to the good Doctor, but his unſcriptural notions.

In the mean time permit me to obſerve, that if any one judges of my letters by the 36th page of your book, he will readily ſay of them what you ſay of the Rev. Mr. Sellon's works: "I have never read them, and from the accounts I hear of the abuſive unchriſtian ſpirit with which they are written, I believe I ſhall never give myſelf that trouble." Now, Sir, I have read Mr. Sellon's books, and have therefore more right than you, who never read them, to give them a public character. You tell us you "*have* HEARD *of the imbecility*

ability of the performance," † &c. and I assure my readers I have *found* it a masterly mixture of the skill belonging to the sensible scholar, the good logician, and the sound anti-Crispian divine.

He is blunt, I confess, and sometimes to an excess. "Really, says he in a private letter, I cannot set my rasor; there is a roughness about me I cannot get rid of. If honest truth will not excuse me, I must bear the blame of those whom nothing will please but smooth things." But sharp (you would say *abusive*) as he is, permit me to tell you that my much admired countryman Calvin was much more so.

For my part, tho' I would no more plead for *abuse* than for *adultery and murder*, yet like a true Swisse I love *blunt honesty*; and to give you a proof of it, I shall take the liberty to observe, It is much easier to say a book is full of *hard names*, and *heavy censures, written in an abusive, unchristian spirit*; and to insinuate it is "dangerous, or not worth reading;" than it is fairly to answer one single page of it. And how far a late publication proves the truth of this observation, I leave our candid readers to decide.

Page 38, you "assure me upon honour, that Mr. W.'s pieces against election and perseverance, (Why did you forget *reprobation?*) have greatly tended to establish your belief in those most comfortable doctrines." Hence you conclude, that "Mr. W.'s pen has done much service to the Calvinistic cause," and add, that "some very experienced Christians hope, he will write again upon that subject, or publish a new edition of his former tracts."

You are too much acquainted with the world, dear Sir, not to know that most Deists declare, I [illegible] they

† Some of the Rev. Mr. Sellon's works are, Arguments against the doctrine of general redemption considered.—A defence of God's sovereignty—and The Church of England, vindicated from the charge of Calvinism: All these are well worth the reading of every sensible and pious man.

they were eſtabliſhed in their ſentiments by reading the Old and New Teſtament. But would you argue concluſively if you inferred from thence, that the ſacred writers *have done* infidelity *much ſervice?* And if ſome confident infidels expreſſed their hopes, that our biſhops *would reprint* the bible to propagate Deiſm; would you not ſee thro' their empty boaſt, and pity their deiſtical *flouriſh?* Permit me, honoured Sir, to expoſe by a ſmile the ſimilar wiſh of the perſons you mention, who, if they are "very experienced Chriſtians," will hardly paſs for very modeſt logicians.

The gentleman of fortune you mention never read *all* Mr. W.'s tracts, nor *one* of Mr. Sellon's on the Criſpian orthodoxy: and I am no more ſurprized to ſee you both diſſent from thoſe divines than I ſhould be to find you both miſtaken upon the bench, if you paſſed a *deciſive* ſentence, before you had ſo much as heard *one* witneſs *out*. The clergyman you refer to has probably been as precipitate as the two pious magiſtrates; therefore you will permit me to doubt whether he, any more than my honoured opponent, "has had courage enough to ſee for himſelf."

CONCLUSION.

Having ſo long animadverted upon your letters, it is time to conſider the preſent ſtate of our controverſy. Mr. W. privately advances among his own friends ſome propoſitions, deſigned to keep them from running in to the faſhionable errors of Dr. Criſp. Theſe propoſitions are ſecretly procured, and publicly expoſed thro' the three kingdoms, as dreadfully heretical, and ſubverſive of the Proteſtant doctrine of *juſtification by faith.* In Mr. W.'s abſence a friend writes in defence of his propoſitions. The Rev. Mr. Shirley, inſtead of trying to defend his miſtakes by argument, publicly recants his circular letter and his volume of ſermons by the lump. Some of the honeſt ſouls, who had been carried away by the ſtream of faſhionable error, begin to look about them, and

aſk

aſk whether *narratives* and *recantations* are to paſs for *ſcriptures* and *arguments?* The worthy author of Pietas Oxonienſis to quiet them, enters the liſts, and makes a ſtand againſt the *anti-Criſpian* propoſitions; but what a ſtand!

(1.) "*Man's faithfulneſs*, ſays he, I have no objection to, in *a ſober goſpel ſenſe* of the word." So Mr. W.'s firſt propoſition, by my opponent's confeſſion, bears a *ſober goſpel ſenſe*.

(2.) He attacks the doctrine of *working for life* by propoſing ſome of the very objections anſwered in the vindication, without taking the leaſt notice of the anſwers—by producing ſcriptures quite foreign to the queſtion, and keeping out of ſight thoſe which have been advanced—by paſſing over in ſilence a variety of rational arguments—jumbling all the degrees of ſpiritual life and death, acceptance and juſtification mentioned in the ſacred oracles—confounding all the diſpenſations of divine grace towards man—and levelling at Mr. W. a witticiſm which wounds Jeſus Chriſt himſelf.

(3.) He acknowledges the truth of the doctrine that we muſt "*do ſomething in order to attain juſtification;*" and after this candid conceſſion, fairly gives up the fundamental Proteſtant doctrine of *juſtification by faith*—the very doctrine which Luther called *Articulus ſtantis vel cadentis Eccleſiæ*, and which our church ſo ſtrongly maintains in her articles and homilies. The Rev. Mr. Shirley throws his ſermon on *Juſtification by faith* overboard: his ſecond comes up to mend the matter, and does it ſo unfortunately as to throw the handle after the ax. He renounces the doctrine itſelf. *I maintain*, ſays he, *that believing cannot be previous to juſtification, that is, to compleat juſtification.* As dangerous a propoſition as was ever advanced by Dr. Criſp, and refuted by all the ſober Calviniſts of the laſt century!

(4.) He oppoſes St. Peter's, Mr. Henry's, and Mr. W.'s doctrine, that "Cornelius was accepted of God in conſequence of his *fearing God and working righteouſneſs*," and inſinuates that Cornelius

was compleatly accepted *before* he feared God and worked righteouſneſs. Upon this ſcheme, the words of St. Peter, *he that feareth God and worketh righteouſneſs is accepted of him*, may mean, "he that DARETH *God and worketh* UNRIGHTEOUSNESS *is compleatly accepted of him!*"

(5.) He repreſents Mr. W. as a Papiſt, for having privately obſerved among his friends, that we have been too much afraid of the word *merit*, while he allows real Proteſtants, the Counteſs of Huntingdon, and the Rev. Mr. Shirley, to publiſh and ſing, *We merit heaven by the righteouſneſs, which Chriſt has ſupplied.* Nay, he ſings the ſame bold words at the Locke-Chapel. The Rev. Mr. Madan's *we merit* paſſes for goſpel; his hymns are every where recommended as evangelical; but "Popery is about mid-way between Proteſtantiſm and Mr. Weſley." What ſtrange prejudice! And yet, ſurprizing! My honoured correſpondent accuſes *me* of betraying "no ſmall degree of *chicanery*" upon the article of *merit!*

(6.) He attempts to "ſplit the hair" which the Rev. Mr. Shirley is wiſe enough not to attempt. But how? Without ceremony he cuts off the middle term between *being rewarded according to our works*, and *as our works deſerve*; he throws out of the queſtion this propoſition that "*we are rewarded* BECAUSE *of our works*" tho' it is ſupported by the plaineſt ſcriptures.

(7.) Notwithſtanding this unwarrantable liberty, when he confidently ſoars upon the wings of orthodoxy, to find his broad paſſage between "*Eaſt* and *Weſt*;" he directly falls into Mr. W.'s ſentiments, about the *rewardableneſs* of works; and before he is aware ſhakes hands with the good Papiſt Scotus, and the good Proteſtant Baxter.

(8.) The laſt propoſition which he attacks is, that "we are continually pleaſing or diſpleaſing to God according to the whole of our inward and outward behaviour." And what does he advance againſt it? Aſſertions and diſtinctions, contradicted by the general tenor of the bible.—Scriptures detached

tached from the context, and set at variance with the clearest declarations of God, and loudest dictates of conscience.—And what is worse than all, dangerous enumerations of the good that falling into adultery, murder, perjury, and incest does to them that love God.

And now, honoured Sir, let the Christian world judge, whether you have been able to fix the mark of error upon *one* of the propositions so loudly decryed as *heretical*; and whether the letters you have honoured me with, do not expose the cause which you have attempted to defend, and demonstrate the absolute necessity of erecting and defending such a seasonable rampart as the minutes to check the rapid progress of Dr. Crisp's gospel.

Permit me, honoured and dear Sir, to conclude by assuring you, that altho' I have thought myself obliged *publicly* to shew the mistakes in the five letters which you have *publicly* directed to me, I gladly do you the justice to acknowledge, that your principles have not that effect upon your conduct, which they naturally have upon the conversation of hundreds who are *consistent* Antinomians. See 2d check, page 71.

If I have addressed my *three checks* to the Rev. Mr. Shirley and yourself, God is my witness that it was not to reflect upon two of the most eminent characters in the circle of my religious acquaintance. Forcible circumstances have over-ruled my inclination. Decipimur specie recti. Thinking to attack error, you have attacked the very truth which providence calls me to defend: and the attack appears to me so much the more dangerous as your laborious zeal and eminent piety are more worthy of public regard, than the boisterous rant and loose insinuations of twenty *practical* Antinomians. The tempter is not so great a novice in Antichristian politics, as to engage only *such* to plead for *doctrinal* Antinomianism. This would soon spoil the trade. It is his master-piece of wisdom to get *good men* to do him that eminent service. He knows that their *good* lives will make

way for their *bad* principles. Nor does he ever deceive with more decency and fuccefs than under the refpectable cloak of their genuine piety.

If a wicked man pleads for fin, fœnum habet in cornu; he carries the mark on his forehead: we ftand upon our guard. But when a good man gives us to underftand that *there are no lengths God's people may not run, nor any depths they may not fall into*, without lofing *the character of men after God's own heart*—that *many will praife God for* our *denial of Chrift*—that *fin and corruption work for good*, that *a fall into adultery will drive us nearer to Chrift*, and *make us fing louder to the praife of free grace*; when he quotes fcripture too in order to fupport thefe affertions, calling them the pure gofpel, and repreſenting the oppofite doctrine as the Pelagian herefy worfe than Popery itfelf; he *cafts the* Antinomian *net on the right fide of the fhip*, and is likely to enclofe a great multitude of unwary men; efpecially if fome of the *beft* hands in the kingdom drive the frighted fhoal into the net, and help to drag it on fhore.

This is, honoured Sir, what I apprehend you have done, not defignedly, but thinking to do God fervice: and this is what every good man, who does not look at the gofpel thro' Dr. Criſp's glafs, muft refolutely oppofe. Hence the ſteadineſs with which I have looked in the face a man of God, whofe feet I fhould be glad to wafh at any time, under a lively fenfe of my great inferiority.

And now, as if I were admitted to fhew you that humble mark of brotherly love, I beg you would not conſider the unceremonious plainneſs of a Suiſſe (mountaineer), as the ſarcaſtic inſolence of an incorrigible Arminian.

I befeech you to make fome difference between the *wifdom* and poifon *of the ſerpent*. If charity forbids to meddle with the latter, does not Chriſt recommend the former? Is every mild, well-meant irony, a bitter and cruel ſarcaſm? Should we directly inſinuate that it is the ſign of "a bad

ſpirit,"

ſpirit," the mark of murder in the heart; and that he who uſes it to ſharpen the truth, † *ſcatters firebrands, arrows and death?* To ſay nothing of Elijah and the prieſts of Baal, did our Lord want either deep ſerioufneſs or ardent love, when coming more than conqueror from his third conflict in Gethſemane, he rouſed his nodding diſciples by this compaſſionate irony, *ſleep on now, and take your reſt!* Did not the uſefulneſs of a loud call, a deſerved reproof, a ſeaſonable expoſtulation, and a ſolemn warning, meet in that well-timed figure of ſpeech? And was it not more effectual than the two awful charges, which he had given them before?

I intreat you to conſider, that when the meaneſt of God's miniſters has truth and conſcience on his ſide, without being either *abuſive* or *uncharitable*, he may ſay, even to one whom the Lord has exalted to the royal dignity, *Thou art the man!* God has exalted you not only among the gentlemen of fortune in this kingdom, but what is an infinitely greater bleſſing, among the converted men who *are tranſlated into the kingdom of his dear Son.* Yet by a miſtake faſhionable among religious people, you have unhappily paid more regard to Dr. Criſp than to St. James. And as you have pleaded the dangerous cauſe of the impenitent monarch, I have addreſſed you with the honeſt boldneſs of the expoſtulating prophet. I have ſaid to my honoured opponent, "*thou art the man*"—with a commendable deſign of comforting "mourning backſliders, you have inadvertently *given occaſion to the enemies of the Lord to blaſpheme*, and unſcripturally aſſured believers, that falls even into enormous ſins ſhall work for their good, and accompliſh God's purpoſes for his glory and their ſalvation." And as I have ſupported my expoſtulations about your *doctrinal*

† This aſſertion is the grand argument of an evangelical writer in the goſpel-magazine, and of a charitable gentleman (a baptiſt miniſter I think) in a printed letter dated *Bath*. If this method of arguing is Calviniſtically evangelical, my readers will eaſily perceive it is very far from being either legal or ſcripturally logical.

trinal miſtake with plain ſcripture, which amounts to a *thus ſays the Lord*; I beſeech you to take them in as good part, as King David did the prophet's reproofs about his *practical* miſcarriages.

I owe much reſpect to you, but more to truth, to conſcience and to God. If in trying to diſcharge my duty towards them, I have inadvertently betrayed any want of reſpect for you; I humbly aſk your pardon; and I can aſſure you in the face of the whole world, that notwithſtanding your ſtrong attachment to the peculiarities of Dr. Criſp, as there is no family in the world to which I am under greater obligation than yours, ſo there are few gentlemen for whom I have ſo peculiar an eſteem, as for the reſpectable author of Pietas Oxonienſis. And till we come where no miſtake will raiſe prejudice, and no prejudice will foment oppoſition to any part of the truth—till we meet where all that *fear God and work righteouſneſs*, however jarring together now, will join in an eternal chorus, and with perfect harmony aſcribe *a common ſalvation to the Lamb that was ſlain*: I declare in the fear of God and in the name of Jeſus, that no oppoſite views of the ſame truths, no claſhing diverſity of contrary ſentiments, no plauſible inſinuations of narrow-hearted bigotry, ſhall hinder me from remaining with the greateſt ſincerity,

Honoured and dear Sir,

Your moſt obedient and obliged Servant
in the bonds of a *practical* Goſpel,

MADELY, *Feb.* 3, 1772. J. F.

POSTSCRIPT.

POSTSCRIPT.

AS I have cleared my conscience with respect to *Antinomianism*, a subject which at this time appears to me of the last importance; I should be glad to employ my leisure hours in writing on subjects more suitable to my taste and private edification: it is by no means my design to obtrude my sentiments upon my Calvinian, any more than upon my Arminian brethren. I sincerely wish peace to both upon the terms of *mutual forbearance*, Veniam petimus que, damus que vicissim. Should therefore a fourth publication call for a fourth check; if I can help it, it shall be *short*. I shall just thank my antagonist for his *deserved* reproofs, or point out his *capital* mistakes, and quote the pages in the *three checks* where his objections are already answered. But if his performance is merely Calvinistical, I shall take the liberty of referring him to the Rev. Mr. Sellon's "imbecil performance," which, I apprehend, every unprejudiced person, who has courage to *see* and *read* for himself, will find *strong* enough to refute the *strongest* arguments of Elisha Coles, and the Synod of Dort.

Before I lay by my pen, I beg leave to address a moment the *true* believers who espouse Calvin's sentiments. Think not, honoured brethren, that I have no eyes to see the eminent services which many of you render to the church of Christ; no heart to bless God for the Christian graces which shine in your exemplary conduct; no pen to testify, that by letting your light shine before men, you adorn the gospel of God our Saviour, as many of your predecessors have done before you. I am not only persuaded that your opinions are consistent with a genuine conversion, but, I take heaven to witness, how much I prefer a Calvinist who loves God, to a Remonstrant who does not. Yes, although I value Christ infinitely above Calvin, and St. James above that good, well-meaning man Dr. Crisp, I had a thousand times rather be

doctrinally

doctrinally mistaken with the latter, than practically deluded with those who speak well of St. James's *perfect law of liberty*, and yet remain lukewarm Laodiceans in heart, and perhaps gross Antinomians in conduct.

This I observe to do your piety justice, and prevent the men of this world, into whose hands these sheets may fall, from *falsely accusing your good conversation in Christ*; and confounding you with *practical* Antinomians, some of whose dangerous notions you inadvertently countenance. If I have therefore taken the liberty of exposing your favourite mistakes, do me the justice to believe that it was not to pour contempt upon your respectable persons; but to set your peculiarities in such a light, as might either engage you to renounce them, or check the forwardness with which some have lately recommended them as the only *doctrine of grace*, and the *pure gospel* of Jesus Christ; unkindly representing their remonstrant brethren as enemies to free grace, and abettors of a dreadful heresy.

If you think that I have exceeded in my checks the bounds which brotherly love prescribes to a controversial writer; permit me to remind you and myself, that we are *parties*, and therefore peculiarly liable, to think the worst of each others intentions and performances. By our respective publications we have appealed to the serious world; let us not then take the matter out of their hands: and while we leave to our merciful God the judging of our spirits, let us leave our serious readers to judge of our arguments, and pass sentence upon the manner in which they are proposed.

And you my remonstrant brethren, who attentively look at our controversial engagement; while a Geneva-Anticalvinist solicits an interest in your prayers for *meekness of wisdom*, permit him to offer you some reasonable advices, which he wants to inculcate upon his own mind also.

(1.) More than ever let us confirm our love towards our calvinist brethren. If our arguments gall them, let us not envenom the sore by maliciously

ouſly triumphing over them. Nothing is more likely to provoke their diſpleaſure, and drive them from what we believe to be the truth. If we, that immediately *bear the burden and heat of* this controverſial *day*, are obliged to cut; help us to act the part of friendly opponents, by directly pouring into the wound the healing balſam of brotherly love; and if you ſee us carried beyond the bounds of moderation, inſtantly admoniſh us, and check our checks. Your *whiſpers* will go farther than the *clamors* of our opponents. The former, we know, muſt proceed from truth: but we are apt to ſuſpect that the latter ſpring from partiality, or a mere ſtratagem not uncommon in controverſial wars. Witneſs the clamour of the Jews and thoſe of the Epheſians, when the one ſaw that their Idol-temple, the other, that great Diana was in danger.

(2.) Do not rejoice in the *miſtakes* of our opponents, but in the *detection* of error. Deſire not that *we*, but that *truth* may prevail. Let us not only be willing that our brethren ſhould win the day, if they have *truth* on their ſide; but let us make it matter of ſolemn and conſtant prayer. While we decry *confined*, *ſhackled* grace, obtruded upon us as *free grace*; let not bigotry *confine* our affections, and *ſhakle* our hearts. Nothing would be more abſurd than to fall into calvinian *narrowneſs* of ſpirit, while we oppoſe Calvin's *narrow* ſyſtem. If we admit the *temper*, we might as well be quite conſiſtent, and at once embrace the *doctrine*. The beſt method of recommending God's univerſal love to mankind, is to love all men univerſally. If abſolute reprobation has no place in our principles, let it have none in our affections. If we believe that all ſhare in the divine mercy, let all be intereſted in our brotherly kindneſs. Should ſuch *practical demonſtrations* of univerſal love, ſecond our *ſcriptural arguments* for it, by God's bleſſing bigotry would ſoon return to Rome, and narrow grace fly back to Geneva.

(3.) Let us ſtrictly obſerve the rules of decency and

and kindneſs, taking care not to treat upon any provocation, any of our opponents in the ſame manner that they have treated Mr. Weſley. The men of the world hint ſometimes that he is a papiſt, and a jeſuit: but good, miſtaken men have gone much farther in the preſent controverſy. They have publiſhed to the world, that they *do verily believe* his *principles are too rotten for even a papiſt to reſt upon*—that *it may be ſuſpected, popery is about the midway between proteſtantiſm and him*—That he *wades through the quagmires of pelagianiſm*, deals in *inconſiſtencies, manifeſt contradictions*, and *ſtrange prevarications*—That, if *a contraſt* was *drawn from his various aſſertions upon the doctrine of unleſs perfection, a little piece* might *extend into a folio volume*—and that they are *more than ever convinced of his prevaricating diſpoſition*. Not ſatisfied with going to *a benedictine monk* in Paris for help againſt his *dreadful hereſy*, they have wittily extracted an argument *ad hominem*, from *the comfortable diſh of tea which he drinks with Mrs. Wheley*; and, to complete the demonſtration of their reſpect for that grey-headed, laborious miniſter of Chriſt, they have brought him upon the ſtage of the controverſy in a dreſs of their own contriving, and made him declare to the world, that WHENEVER *he and fifty-three of his fellow labourers* SAY *one thing, they* MEAN *quite* ANOTHER. And what has he done to deſerve this uſage at *their* hands? Which of *them* has he treated unjuſtly or unkindly? Even in the courſe of this controverſy has he injured any man? May he not ſay to this hour, tu pugnas: ego vapulo tantum? Let us avoid this warmth, my brethren; remembering that perſonal reflections will never paſs for convincing arguments with the judicious and humane.

I have endeavoured to follow this advice with regard to Dr. Criſp: nevertheleſs, leſt you ſhould rank him with *practical* Antinomians, I once more gladly profeſs my belief that he was a *good* man; and deſire that none of you would condemn *all* his ſermons, much leſs his *character*, on account of

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his *unguarded antinomian* propoſitions refuted by Williams and Baxter, ſome of which I have taken the liberty to produce in the preceding checks. As there are a few things exceptionable in good Biſhop Hopkins, ſo there are many things admirable in Dr. Criſp's works: and as the glorious truths advanced by the former, ſhould not make you receive his calvinian miſtakes as goſpel; ſo the illegal tenets of the latter, ſhould by no means make you reject his evangelical ſayings as Antinomianiſm. *Prove* therefore *all things*, and *hold faſt that which is good*, though it ſhould be advanced by the warmeſt of our opponents; but whatever unadviſed ſtep their zeal for what they believe to be the truth makes them take, *put* YE *on (as the* ELECT *of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, long ſuffering, forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any; even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.*

(4.) If you would help us to remove the prejudices of our brethren, not only grant with a good grace, but ſtrongly inſiſt upon the great truths for which they make ſo noble a ſtand. Steadily aſſert with them, that the ſcraps of morality and formality, by which Phariſees and Deiſts pretend to merit the divine favour, are only *filthy rags* in the ſight of a holy God; and that no righteouſneſs is current in heaven but *the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith.* If they have ſet their heart upon calling it *the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt*, though the expreſſion is not ſtrictly ſcriptural, let it paſs; but give them to underſtand, that as *divine* imputation of righteouſneſs is a moſt glorious * *reality*,

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* God's imputation of righteouſneſs is always *according to truth.* As all ſinful men actually *partake* of Adam's ſinful nature, by the defiling ſeed of his corruption, before God *accounts* them *guilty* together with him: ſo all righteous men *partake* of Chriſt's holy nature by the ſeed of divine grace, before God *accounts* them *righteous* together with Chriſt. The dictate of reaſon is confirmed by ſcripture. *Abraham was fully perſuaded that what God had promiſed he was able alſo to perform; and therefore it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs;* and *it* SHALL *be imputed to us,* IF WE BELIEVE *on him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead,* Rom. iv. 21, &c.

to *human* imputation is a moſt deluſive *dream*: and that of this ſort is undoubtedly the *calvinian imputation* of righteouſneſs to a man, who actually defiles his neighbour's bed, and betrays innocent blood. A dangerous contrivance this! not leſs ſubverſive of common heathenish morality, than of St. James's *pure and undefiled religion*.

Again, our calviniſt brethren excel in ſetting forth *a part* of Chriſt's prieſtly office: I mean the immaculate purity of his moſt holy life, and the all-atoning, all-meritorious ſacrifice of his bloody death. Here imitate, and if poſſible ſurpaſs them. Shout a *finiſhed atonement* louder than they. *Behold* with rapture of joy, and bid all around you *behold* with tranſport of gratitude, the *Lamb of God that taketh away the ſin of the world*. If they call this compleat atonement *finiſhed ſalvation*, or *the finiſhed work of Chriſt*, indulge them ſtill; for peace's ſake let theſe expreſſions paſs: nevertheleſs, at proper times give them to underſtand, that it is abſolutely contrary to reaſon, ſcripture and chriſtian experience, to think that *all* Chriſt's mediatorial work is *finiſhed*. Inſinuate, you ſhould be very miſerable if he had nothing more to do *for* you and *in* you. Tell them, as they can bear it, that he works *daily* as a *prophet* to enlighten you, as a *prieſt* to make interceſſion for you, as a *king* to ſubdue your enemies, as a *redeemer* to deliver you out of all your troubles, and as a *Saviour* to help you to work out your own ſalvation; and hint that in all theſe reſpects Chriſt's work is no more finiſhed than the working of our own ſalvation is compleated.

The judicious will underſtand you; as for bigots on all ſides, you know, they are proof againſt ſcripture and good ſenſe. Nevertheleſs mild irony ſharply

From this paſſage it is evident that faith, which unites to Chriſt and *purifies the heart*, is previous to God's imputation of righteouſneſs, although not to Dr. Criſp's imputation, which by a little miſtake of only 5 or 6000 years he dates from *before the foundation of the world*. One is ſadly out, either the good Doctor, or the great Apoſtle.

ſharply pointing a ſcriptural argument, may yet paſs between the joints of their impenetrable armour, and make them feel—either ſome ſhame, or ſome wearineſs of contention. But this is a dangerous method, which I would recommend to very few. None ſhould dip his pen in the wine of irony, till he has dipped it in the oil of love; and even then, he ſhould not uſe it without conſtant prayer, and as much caution as a ſurgeon lances an impoſtume. If he goes too deep, he does miſchief; if not deep enough, he loſes his time; the virulent humour is not diſcharged, but irritated by the ſkin-deep operation. And *who is ſufficient for theſe things?* Gracious God of wiſdom and love! if thou calleſt us to this difficult and thankleſs office, let all *our ſufficiency* be *of thee*; and ſhould the operation ſucceed, thine and thine alone ſhall be all the glory.

(5.) And yet, brethren, *I ſhow you a more excellent way* than that of mild irony ſharpening a ſtrong argument. If love is the fulfilling of the law, love after all muſt be the deſtruction of antinomianiſm. We ſhall do but little good by expoſing the doctrinal antinomianiſm of Dr. Criſp's admirers, if our own tempers and conduct are inconſiſtent with our profeſſion of evangelical legality. When our antagoniſts cannot ſhake our arguments, they will upbraid us with our practice. Let us then take care not to *hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs*: let our moderation and evangelical legality appear even to our *candid* opponents: ſo ſhall *the righteouſneſs of the law be fulfilled in us that believe* the anti-Criſpian truth: ſo ſhall our *faith eſtabliſh the law* of ardent love to God and man; and wherever that *law is eſtabliſhed*, antinomianiſm is no more. And if, when we truly love our antagoniſts, they ſtill look upon our oppoſition to their errors as an abuſe of their perſons, and call our expoſing their miſtakes "ſneering at the truth;" let us wrap our ſouls in the mantle of that *love which is not provoked*; remembering *the diſciple is not above his Maſter, nor the ſervant above his Lord.*

(6.) Above

(6.) Above all, while we expostulate with our brethren for going to one extreme, let us not go to another. Many in the last century so preached what Christ did FOR us in the days of his flesh, as to overlook what he does IN us in the days of his spirit. The Quakers saw their error; but while they exposed it, they ran into the opposite. They so extolled Christ *living* in us, as to say but little of Christ *dying* for us. At this many hearing our *salvation* is so *finished* by Christ, that we need not *work it out with fear and trembling*, are justly shocked; and thinking they cannot fly too far from so wild a notion, they run headlong into pelagianism, socinianism, or gross infidelity. Let us, my brethren, learn wisdom by their contrary mistakes. While some run full east, and others full west, keep we under the bright meridian line of evangelical truth, at an equal distance from their dangerous extremes. By cordial faith let us daily *receive the atonement*: and making our perpetual boast of Christ crucified, let us recommend his inestimable merits to all convinced sinners, chearfully commending our souls to him *in well doing*, and growing in his knowledge till we experience that he *is all and in all*. So shall we adorn the gospel of God our Saviour in all things; nor will our opponents have any occasion to reprove us for *pharisaic unbelief*, when we reprove them for *antinomian faith*.

FINIS.